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THE
CHILDREN
OF
THE ABBEY.
A TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY REGINA MARIA ROCHE.

A matchless pair ;
With equal virtue form'd and equal grace,
The same, distinguish'd by their sex alone :
Her's the mild lustre of the blooming morn
And his the radiance of the risen day.

THOMSON.

SEVENTH AMERICAN EDITION.

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THE
CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY.

CHAP. I.

SHE remained a considerable time in a state of insensibility, and, when recovered, she found herself in a bed laid upon the floor, in a corner of the outside room: her senses were at first confused; she felt as if waking from a disagreeable dream, but in a few minutes a perfect recollection of what had past returned; she saw some one sitting by the bed; she raised herself a little, and perceived sister Mary. "This is indeed a charitable visit," cried she, extending her hand, and speaking in a low broken voice. The good-natured nun jumped from her seat, on hearing her speak, and embraced her most tenderly. Her caresses affected Amanda inexpressibly: she dropped her head upon her breast, and wept with a vehemence which relieved the oppression of her heart.

Sister Mary said she had never heard of her return to the country till Mrs. Bryne came to St. Catharine's for a few sprigs of rosemary to strew over the poor captain; she had returned with her then to the cabin, to try if she could be of any service, and to invite her, in the name of the prioress and the whole sisterhood, to the convent.

Amanda thanked her for her kind invitation, which, she said, she must decline accepting for a few days, till she had performed all her duties, which, in a voice half stifled by sobs, she added, "the grave would soon terminate; she was sorry," she said, "that they had undress-

ed her, and requested sister Mary to assist her in putting on her clothes." The sister tried to dissuade her from this, but soon found she was determined to spend the remainder of the night in her father's apartment: she accordingly dressed her (for Amanda's trembling hands refused their accustomed office), and made her take a glass of wine and water ere she suffered her to move towards the door. Amanda was astonished, as she approached it, to hear a violent noise, like the mingled sounds of laughing and singing; her soul recoiled at the tumult, and she asked sister Mary, with a countenance of terror, "what it meant?" She replied, "It was only some friends and neighbours doing honour to the captain." Amanda hastily opened the door, anxious to terminate the suspense these words occasioned; but how great was her horror when she perceived a set of the meanest rustics assembled round the bed, with every appearance of inebriety, laughing, shouting, and smoking. What a savage scene for a child, whose heart was bursting with grief! She shrieked with horror, and flinging herself into the arms of sister Mary, conjured her to have the room cleared.

Sister Mary, from being accustomed to such scenes, felt neither horror nor disgust; she complied, however, with the request of Amanda, and besought them to depart, saying, "that miss Fitzalan was a stranger to their customs, and besides, poor thing, quite beside herself with grief." They began to grumble at the proposal of removing; they had made preparations for spending a merry night, and Mrs. Bryne said, "if she had thought things would have turned out in this way, the captain might have found some other place to die in—for the least one could have, after his giving them so much trouble, was a little enjoyment with one's friends at the latter end." Johnaten and Kate, who were among the party, joined their entreaties to sister Mary's, and she, to tempt them to compliance, said, "that, in all probability, they would soon have another and a better opportunity for making merry than the present." They at length retired, and sister Mary and Amanda were left alone in the

chamber of death. The dim light which remained cast a glimmering shade upon the face of Fitzalan that added to its ghastliness. Amanda now indulged in all the luxury of grief, and found in sister Mary a truly sympathetic friend, for the good nun was famed throughout the little circle of her acquaintance for weeping with those that wept, and rejoicing with those that rejoiced. She obtained a promise from Amanda of accompanying her to St. Catharine's, as soon as her father was interred; and, in return for this, she gave an assurance for continuing with her till the last melancholy offices were over—and also, that, with the assistance of Johnaten, she would see every thing proper divided. This was some comfort to Amanda, who felt herself at present unequal to any exertion; yet, notwithstanding her fatigue and illness, she persevered in her resolution of sitting up with her father every night, dreading that, if she retired to bed, a scene of riot would again ensue, which, in her opinion, was sacrilege to the dead. She went to bed every morning, and was nursed with the most tender attention by sister Mary, who also insisted on being her companion at night. This, however, was but a mere matter of form, for the good sister was totally unable to keep her eyes open, and slept as comfortably upon the earthen floor, with her gown made into a pillow for her head, as if laid upon the down; then was poor Amanda left to her own reflections, and the melancholy contemplation of her beloved father's remains. The evening of the fourth day after his decease was fixed upon for his interment: with streaming eyes and a breaking heart Amanda beheld him put into the coffin, and in that moment felt as if he had again died before her. A small procession attended, consisting of the people of the house, Johnaten and Kate, and a few respectable farmers, to whom Fitzalan had endeared himself during his short abode at Castle Carberry; the men had scarfs and hat-bands, and the women hoods.

Johnaten, who had been a soldier in his youth, resolved to pay some military honour, and placed his hat and

sword upon the coffin. Amanda, by the most painful efforts, supported the preparations for his removal; but, when she saw the coffin actually raised to be taken out, she could no longer restrain her feelings; she shrieked in the agony of her soul; a sickness, almost deadly, seized her, and she fell fainting upon sister Mary's bosom!

CHAP. II.

Oh! let me unlade my breast,
 Pour out the fulness of my soul before you,
 Show every tender, every grateful thought,
 This wond'rous goodness stirs: but 'tis impossible,
 And ut'rance all is vile; since I can only
 Swear you reign here, but never tell how much.

ROWE.—*Fair Pen.*

SISTER Mary recovered her with difficulty, but found it impossible to remove her from the cabin till she was more composed. In about two hours its inhabitants returned, and the car having arrived which she had ordered, to convey Amanda to St. Catharine's, she was placed upon it in a state scarcely animate, and, supported by sister Mary, was conveyed to that peaceful asylum.

On arriving at it, she was carried immediately into the prioress's apartment, who received and welcomed her with the most tender affection and sensibility—a tenderness which roused Amanda from the stupefaction into which she appeared sinking, and made her weep violently. She felt relieved from doing so, and, as some return for the kindness she received, endeavoured to appear benefited by it; she therefore declined going to bed, but lay down upon a little matted couch in the prioress's room—the tea-table was close by it; as she refused any

other refreshment, she obtained this by a promise of eating something with it: none of the sisterhood, sister Mary excepted, were admitted, and Amanda felt this delicate attention and respect to her sorrows with gratitude.

She arrived on the eve of their patron Saint at the convent, which was always celebrated with solemnity: after tea, therefore, the prioress and sister Mary were compelled to repair to the chapel, but she removed the reluctance they felt to leave her alone, by complaining of being drowsy. A pillow being laid under her head by sister Mary, soon after they quitted her, she fell into a profound slumber, in which she continued till awoke by distant music, so soft, so clear, so harmonious, that the delightful sensation it gave her she could only compare to those which she imagined a distressed and pensive soul would feel, when, springing from the shackles of mortality, it first heard the heavenly sounds that welcomed it to the realms of eternal bliss.

The chapel, from which those celestial sounds proceeded, was at the extremity of the house, so that they sometimes swelled upon her ear, sometimes faintly sunk upon it. The pauses in the organ, which was finely played, were filled up by the sweet, though less powerful, strains of the sisterhood, who sung a hymn in honour of their saint.

No one was here exempt,
No voice but well could join melodious part.

'Tis a foretaste of heaven, thought Amanda. She heard a deep sigh behind her. She turned her head hastily, and perceived a figure standing near which bore a strong resemblance to lord Mortimer. She was alarmed. She could not believe it was him. The light which the small heavy-arched window admitted was imperfect, and she rose from the couch to be better assured it was or was not him; a second glance convinced her: she might have believed her eyes at first.

Trembling and astonished she sunk upon a seat, ex-

claiming, "Gracious Heaven! what can have brought lord Mortimer hither?"

He made no reply, but, kneeling before her, took her hands in his, and pressed them to his forehead and lips, and laid his head upon them.

"Why," cried Amanda, unutterably affected by the emotions he betrayed, "why, my lord, are you come hither?"

"To try," he replied, in a voice scarcely articulate, "whether miss Fitzalan will yet consider me as her friend?"

"That, my lord," said she, "depends upon circumstances; but, while your lordship remains in your present position, what they are I cannot explain."

Lord Mortimer instantly arose, and seated himself by her. "Now tell me," said he, "what those circumstances are."

"The first, my lord, is to exculpate my father in the opinion of lord Cherbury, and, by declaring the commencement and progress of our acquaintance, eradicate from his lordship's mind the injurious suspicions he entertained against him. This, perhaps, you will say is useless, considering those suspicions can no longer wound him; but, my lord, I deem it an incumbent duty on me to remove from his memory the obloquy on my account cast on it."

"I promise you most solemnly," said lord Mortimer, "you shall be obeyed. This is a debt of justice which I had resolved to pay ere I received your injunction for doing so; it is but lately I heard of the unjust charges made against him, nor do I know what fiend gave rise to them."

"The same, perhaps," exclaimed Amanda, "who spread such complicated snares for my destruction, and involved me in every horror but that which proceeds from conscious guilt. Oh! my lord, the second circumstance I allude to is, if you should hear my name treated with scorn and contempt by those few, those very few whom I had reason to esteem, and to believe esteemed me, that you will kindly interpose in my justification, and

say, I merited not the aspersions cast upon me. Believe me innocent, and you will easily persuade others I am so. You shake your head, as much as to say you cannot think me so after the proofs you have seen to the contrary. Ah! my lord, the proofs were contrived by malice and treachery, to ruin me in the estimation of my friends, and by perfidy to force me into a crime, of which I already bear the appearance and stigma. Surely in this solemn hour, which has seen my beloved father consigned to his kindred earth, when, with a mind harassed by sorrow, and a body worn out with fatigue, I feel as if standing on the verge of the grave, I should be the most abandoned of wretches, if I could assert my innocence without the consciousness of really possessing it. No, my lord, by such a falsehood, I should not only be wicked, but foolish in depriving myself of that happiness hereafter, which will so fully recompense my present miseries."

"Oh! Amanda," cried lord Mortimer, who had been walking backwards and forwards in an agitated manner while she spoke, "you would almost convince me against the evidence of my own senses."

"Almost," she repeated; "then I see, my lord, you are determined to disbelieve me: but why, since so prejudiced against me, have you come hither? was it merely to be assured of my wretchedness? to hear me say that I stand alone in the world, without one being interested about my welfare, that my present asylum is bestowed by charity, and that if my life be prolonged, it must be spent in struggling against constitution, sorrow, and ill fame, to procure a subsistence?"

"No, no," exclaimed lord Mortimer, flinging himself at her feet, "never shall you suffer such misery; were you even the being I was tempted to think you some time ago, never would Mortimer suffer the woman his heart doated on to feel such calamity. I do not, I cannot believe you would deceive me. There is an irresistible eloquence in your words, that convinces me you have been the victim of treachery, and I its dupe: I cannot give you a more convincing proof of my confidence in

you, than by again renewing my entreaties to have one fame, one fate, one fortune ours."

The resolution which Amanda had forced to support her through the painful scene she guest would ensue the moment she saw lord Mortimer now vanished, and she burst into a flood of tears.

She saw his conduct in the most generous, the most exalted light: notwithstanding appearances were so much against her, he was willing to rely solely on her own asseveration of innocence, and to run every risk on her account; that by a union he might shelter her from the distresses of her present situation. But, while her sensibility was affected by his expressions, her pride was alarmed lest he should impute her ardent desire of vindicating herself to the expectation of having his addresses renewed. In broken accents she endeavoured to remove such an idea if it had arisen, and to convince him that all further intimacy between them must now be terminated. Lord Mortimer ascribed the latter part of her speech to the resentment she felt against him for ever entertaining doubts of her worth. She desired him to rise, but he refused until he was forgiven. "My forgiveness is your's indeed, my lord," said she; "though your suspicions wounded me to the soul, I can scarcely wonder at your entertaining them, when I reflect on the different situations in which I was found, which, if your lordship can spare a little longer time, or deem it worth devoting to such a purpose, as well as I am able I will account for being involved in."—Lord Mortimer declared his ardent desire to hear those particulars, which nothing but a fear of fatiguing or agitating her could have prevented his before expressing. He then seated himself by her, and, taking her cold and emaciated hand in his, listened to her little narrative.

She briefly informed him of her father's residing in Devonshire after the death of her mother, of the manner in which they became acquainted with Colonel Belgrave, of his having ingratiated himself into their friendship, by pretending to be Oscar's friend, and then plun-

ging them in distress, when he found they not only resisted but resented his villainous designs.

She related the artful manner in which lady Greystock had drawn her from her father's protection, and the cold and insolent reception she met from the marchioness and her daughter, when introduced by the abovementioned lady; the enmity the marchioness bore her father, the sudden alteration in her behaviour, the invitation to her house, so unexpected and unnecessary, all tending to inspire a belief that she was concerned in contriving colonel Belgrave's admittance to the house, and had also given lord Cherbury reason to suspect the integrity of her father.

Lord Mortimer here interrupted Amanda to mention the conversation which passed between him and Mrs. Jane in the hall.

She raised her hands and eyes to heaven with astonishment at such wickedness, and said, "Though she always suspected the girl's integrity, from a certain sycophant air, she never imagined she could be capable of such baseness."

Lord Mortimer again interrupted her to mention what lady Greystock had told him concerning Mrs. Jennings, as also what the housekeeper had said of the note he gave for Amanda.

"Good God!" said Amanda, "when I hear of all the enemies I had, I almost wonder I escaped so well." She then resumed her narrative, accounted for the dislike Mrs. Jennings had to her, and explained the way in which she was entrapped into colonel Belgrave's power, the almost miraculous manner in which she was freed from his house, the friendship she received from Howell, and the situation in which she arrived at Castle Carberry, and found her father. The closing scene she could not describe, for sighs and sobs impeded her utterance. Lord Mortimer gently folded her to his breast; he called her his dear, his unfortunate, his lovely girl, more precious than ever to his heart, and declared he never again would quit her till she had given him a right to espouse her quarrels, and secure her

from the machinations of her enemies. Her warm tears wet his cheek as she exclaimed, "that could never be!"

"My promise is already past," cried she; "that which was given to the living, shall not be forfeited to the dead; and this, my lord, by design, is the last time we must ever meet."

"What promise?" exclaimed lord Mortimer; "surely no one would be so inhuman as to extort a promise from you to give me up."

"It was not inhumanity extorted it," replied Amanda; "but honour, rectitude, and discretion; without forfeiting those, never can I violate it. There is but one event could make me acquiesce in your wishes, that is, having a fortune adequate to yours to bring you, because then lord Cherbury would ascribe no selfish motive to my conduct; but as such an event is utterly improbable, I might almost say impossible, it is certain we never shall be united. Any farther intercourse between us, you must therefore be convinced, would injure me. Disturb not, therefore, my lord, my retirement; but, ere you depart, allow me to assure you, you have lightened the weight on my heart by crediting what I have said; should I not recover from the illness which now preys upon me, it will cheer my departing spirit to know you think me innocent; and, if I live, it will support me through many difficulties, and often, perhaps, after the toils of a busy day, shall comfort myself by reflecting, that those I esteem, if they think of me, it is with their wonted regard."

Lord Mortimer was affected by the manner in which she spoke; his eyes began to glisten, and he was again declaring he would not suffer her to sacrifice happiness at the shrine of a too scrupulous and romantic generosity, when the door opened, and the prioress and sister Mary (who had been detained in the chapel by a long discourse from the priest) entered, bearing lights.

Lord Mortimer started in much confusion, retreated to one of the windows, and drew out his handkerchief to conceal the emotions Amanda had excited. She was unable to speak to the prioress and sister Mary, who

stared round them, and then at each other, not certain whether they should advance or retreat. Lord Mortimer in a few moments recovered his composure, and, advancing to the prioress, apologized for his intrusion into her apartment; but said he had the honour of being a friend of miss Fitzalan's, and could not resist his wish of inquiring in person after her health, as soon as he arrived in the country.

The prioress, who had once seen a good deal of the polite world, received this address with ease and complaisance. Sister Mary went over to Amanda, and found her weak, trembling, and weeping. She expressed the utmost concern at seeing her in such a situation, and immediately procured her a glass of wine, which she insisted on her taking. The lights now gave lord Mortimer an opportunity of contemplating the depredations which grief and sickness had made upon her. Her pale and sallow complexion, her heavy and sunken eyes, struck him with horror. He could not conceal his feelings. "Gracious heaven!" cried he, going to the couch, and taking her hand, "I fear you are very ill."

She looked mournfully in his face without speaking; but this look was sufficient to assure him he was not mistaken. The efforts she had made to converse with him, and the yet greater efforts she had made to banish him for ever from her, quite exhausted her. After the various miseries she had gone through, how soothing to her soul would have been the attentions of lord Mortimer, how pleasing, how delightful the asylum she should have found in his arms! But no temptation, no distress, she resolved, should ever make her disobey the injunction of her adored father.

"She is very bad, indeed," said sister Mary, "and we must get her to bed as soon as possible."

"She requires rest and repose indeed," said lord Mortimer; "but tell me, my dear miss Fitzalan," taking her hand, "if I have those good ladies' permission for calling here to-morrow, will you, if able to rise, see me?"

"I cannot indeed," said Amanda; "I have already declared this must be our last interview, and I shall not retract from what I have said."

"Then," exclaimed lord Mortimer, regardless, or rather forgetful of those who heard him, from the agitation and warmth of his feelings, "I shall, in one respect at least, accuse you of dissimulation, that of feigning a regard for me you never felt."

"Such an accusation is now of little consequence," replied Amanda; "perhaps you had better think it just."

"Cruel, inexorable girl, to refuse seeing me, to wish to have the anxiety which preys upon my heart prolonged."

"Young man," said the prioress, in an accent of displeasure, seeing the tears streaming down Amanda's cheeks, "respect her sorrows."

"Respect them, madam?" repeated he; "O heaven! I respect, I venerate them: but will you, my dear lady, when miss Fitzalan is able, prevail on her to communicate the particulars of our acquaintance; and will you then become my advocate, and persuade her to receive my visits?"

"Impossible, sir," said the prioress; "I shall never attempt to desire a larger share of confidence from miss Fitzalan than she desires to bestow upon me. From my knowledge of her I am convinced her conduct will always be guided by discretion: she has greatly obliged me by choosing this humble retreat for her residence; she has put herself under my protection, and I shall endeavour to fulfil that sacred trust by securing her from any molestation."

"Well, madam," said lord Mortimer, "I flatter myself miss Fitzalan will do me justice in declaring my visits proceeded from wishes which, though she may disappoint, she cannot disapprove. I shall no longer intrude upon your time or hers, but will still hope I shall find you both less inflexible."

He took up his hat, he approached the door; but when he glanced at Amanda, he could not depart without

speaking to her, and again went to the couch. He entreated her to compose and exert herself; he desired her forgiveness for any warmth he had betrayed, and he whispered to her that all his earthly happiness depended on her restoration to health, and her becoming his. He insisted on her now giving him her hand as a pledge of amity between them. She complied; but when, presuming on this, he again asked her consent to repeat his visits, he found her inexorable as ever, and retired, if not with a displeased, with a disappointed countenance. Sister Mary attended him from the apartment. At the door of the convent he requested her to walk a few paces from it with him, saying he wanted to speak to her. She consented, and remembering he was the person who frightened her one evening amongst the ruins, determined now, if she had an opportunity, to ask what had then brought him hither.

Lord Mortimer knew the poverty of the convent, and feared Amanda might want many things, or its inhabitants be distressed to procure them for her; he therefore pulled out a purse, and presenting it to sister Mary, requested she would apply it for miss Fitzalan's use, without mentioning any thing about it to her.

Sister Mary shook the purse. "Oh! Jesu Maria," exclaimed she, "how heavy it is!"

Lord Mortimer was retiring, when, catching hold of him, she cried, "Stay, stay, I have a word or two to say to you: I wonder how much there is in this purse?"

Lord Mortimer smiled. "If not enough for the present emergencies," said he, "it shall soon be replenished."

Sister Mary sat down upon a tomb-stone, and very deliberately counted the money into her lap. "Oh! mercy," said she, "I never saw so many guineas together before in all my life!"

Again lord Mortimer smiled, and was retiring, but again stopping him, she returned the gold into the purse, and declared, "she neither would or durst keep it."

Lord Mortimer was provoked at this declaration, and, without replying to it, walked on. She ran nimbly after

him, and, dropping the purse at his feet, was out of sight in a moment.

When she returned to the prioress's apartment she related the incident, and took much merit to herself for acting so prudently. The prioress commended her very much, and poor Amanda, with a faint voice, said she had acted quite right.

A little room, inside the prioress's chamber, was prepared for Amanda, into which she was now conveyed, and the good-natured sister Mary brought her own bed, and laid it beside hers.

CHAP. III.

“With dirges due and sad array,
“Slow through the church-way path I saw him borne.”

IT will now be necessary to account for the sudden appearance of lord Mortimer at the convent. Our reader may recollect that we left him in London, in the deepest affliction for the supposed perfidy of Amanda; an affliction which knew no diminution from time. Neither the tenderness of his aunt, lady Martha Dormer, or the kind consideration his father showed for him, who, for the present, ceased to importune him about lady Euphrasia, could have any lenient effect upon him; he pined in thought, and felt a distaste to all society: he at last began to think, that, though Amanda had been unhappily led astray, she might ere this have repented of her error, and forsaken colonel Belgrave: to know whether she had done so, or whether she could be prevailed upon to give him up, he believed would be an alleviation of his sorrows. No sooner had he persuaded himself of this, than he determined on going to Ireland.

without delay, to visit captain Fitzalan, and if she was not returned to his protection, advise with him about some method of restoring her to it.

He told lord Cherbury he thought any excursion into Wales would be of service to him. His lordship agreed in thinking it might; and, secretly delighted that all danger relative to Amanda was over, gladly concurred in whatever could please his son, flattering himself, that on his return to London he would no longer raise any objections to an alliance with the fair Scotch heiress.

Lord Mortimer travelled with as much expedition to Holyhead, as if certain that perfect happiness, not a small alleviation of misery, would be the recompence of his journey. He concealed from his aunt the real motives which actuated him to it, blushing, even to himself, at the weakness which he still felt relative to Amanda.

When he crossed the water he again set off post, attended on horseback only by his own man; within one mile of Castle Carberry he met a little mournful procession approaching, which was attending poor Fitzalan to his last home. The carriage stopped to let them pass, and in the last of the group he perceived Johnaten, who at the same moment recognized him. Johnaten, with much surprize in his countenance, stepped up to the carriage, and after bowing, and humbly hoping his lordship was well, with a melancholy shake of his head, informed him whose remains he was following.

"Captain Fitzalan dead!" repeated lord Mortimer, with a face as pale as death, and a faltering voice, while his heart sunk within him at the idea that his father was in some degree accessory to the fatal event; for just before he left London lord Cherbury had informed him of the letter he wrote to Fitzalan, and this he believed, joined to his own immediate family misfortunes, had precipitated him from the world. "Captain Fitzalan dead!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, an please you, my lord," said Johnaten, wiping away a tear, "and he has not left a better or a braver man."

behind him. Poor gentleman, the world pressed hard upon him."

"Had he no tender friend about him?" asked lord Mortimer. "Were neither of his children with him?"

"Oh! yes, my lord, poor miss Amanda."

"She was with him?" said lord Mortimer, in an eager accent.

"Yes, my lord, she returned here about ten days ago, but so sadly altered, I think she won't stay long behind him. Poor thing, she is going fast indeed, and the more's the pity, for she is a sweet creature."

Lord Mortimer was inexpressibly shocked; he wished to hide his emotions, and waved his hand to Johnaten to depart; but Johnaten either did not, or would not, understand the motion, and he was obliged in broken accents to say, he would no longer detain him.

The return of Amanda was to him a conviction that she had seen her error in its true light; he pictured to himself the affecting scene which must have ensued between a dying father and a penitent daughter, so loved, so valued as was Amanda, her situation when she received his forgiveness and benediction; he represented her to himself as at once bewailing the loss of her father, and her offences, endeavouring, by prayers, by tears, by sighs, to obliterate them in the sight of Heaven, and render herself fit to receive its awful fiat.

He heard she was dying; his soul recoiled at the idea of seeing her shrouded in her native clay, and yet he could not help believing this the only peaceful asylum she could find to be freed from the shafts of contempt, and malice of the world. He trembled lest he should not behold the lovely penitent while she was capable of observing him; to receive a last adieu, though dreadful, would yet, he thought, lighten the horrors of an eternal separation, and perhaps, too, it would be some comfort to her departing spirit to know from him he had pardoned her, and conscious surely, he thought to himself, she must be of needing pardon from him, whom she had so long imposed on by a specious pretext of virtue. He had

heard from lord Cherbury that captain Fitzalan had quitted the castle; he knew not therefore at present where to find Amanda, nor did he choose to make any inquiries till he again saw Johnaten.

As soon as the procession was out of sight, he alighted from the carriage; and ordering his man to discharge it on arriving at Castle Carberry, he took a path across the fields, which brought him to the side of the church-yard where Fitzalan was to be interred.

He reached it just as the coffin was lowering into the earth; a yew tree growing by the wall against which he leaned, hid him from observation. He heard many of the rustics mentioning the merits of the deceased, in terms of warm, though artless commendation, and he saw Johnaten receiving the hat and sword, which, as military trophies, he had laid upon the coffin, with a flood of tears.

When the church-yard was cleared, he stept across the broken wall to the silent mansion of Fitzalan; the scene was wild and dreary, and a lowering evening seemed in unison with the sad objects around. Lord Mortimer was sunk in the deepest despondence; he felt awfully convinced of the instability of human attainments, and the vanity of human pursuits, not only from the ceremony he had just witnessed, but his own situation; the fond hopes of his heart, the gay expectations of his youth, and the hilarity of his soul were blasted—never, he feared, to revive. Virtue, rank, and fortune, advantages so highly prized by mankind, were unable to give him comfort, to remove the malady of his heart, to administer one oblivious antidote to a mind diseased.

“Peace to thy shade, thou unfortunate soldier,” exclaimed he, after standing some time by the grave with folded arms; “peace to thy shade! peace which shall reward thee for a life of toil and trouble. Happy should I have deemed myself, had it been my lot to have lightened thy grief, or cheered thy closing hours; but those who were dearer to thee than existence I may yet serve, and thus make the only atonement now in my power for the injustice I fear was done thee; thy Amanda, and thy

gallant son, shall be my care, and his path, I trust, it will be in my power to smooth through life."

A tear fell from lord Mortimer upon the grave, and he turned mournfully from it towards Castle Carberry. Here Johnaten was arrived before him, and had already a large fire lighted in the dressing-room poor Amanda, on coming to the castle, had chosen for herself. Johnaten fixed on this for lord Mortimer, as the parlours had been shut up ever since captain Fitzalan's departure, and could not be put in order till the next day; but it was the worst place lord Mortimer could have entered, as not only itself but every thing in it reminded him of Amanda, and the grief it excited at his first entrance was so violent as to alarm not only his man, who was spreading a table with refreshments, but Johnaten, who was assisting him. He soon checked it, however; but when he again looked round the room, and beheld it ornamented by works done by Amanda, he could scarcely prevent another burst of grief as violent as the first.

He now learned Amanda's residence, and so great was his impatience to see her, that, apprehensive the convent would soon be closed, he set off, fatigued as he was, without taking any refreshment.

He intended to ask for one of the ladies of St. Catharine's, and intreat her, if Amanda was then in a situation to be seen, to announce his arrival to her; but, after rapping repeatedly with a raftan against the door, the only person who appeared to him was a servant girl. From her he learned that the ladies were all in the chapel, and that miss Fitzalan was in the prioress's apartment. He asked, "Was she too ill to be seen?" The girl replied, "No;" for having only entered the room to leave the kettle in it, at a time when Amanda was composed, she imagined she was very well.

Lord Mortimer then told her his name, and desired her to go up to miss Fitzalan and inquire whether she would see him. The girl attempted not to move; she was in reality so struck of a heap, by hearing that she had been talking to a lord, that she knew not whether she was standing on her head or her heels. Lord Morti-

mer, imputing her silence to disinclination to comply with his request, put a guinea into her hand, and entreated her to be expeditious. This restored her to animation; but, ere she reached the room, she forgot his title, and being ashamed to deliver a blundering message to miss Fitzalan, or to appear stupid to lord Mortimer, she returned to him, pretending that she had delivered his message, and that he might go up. She showed him the door, and, when he entered, he imputed the silence of Amanda, and her not moving, to the effects of her grief. He advanced to the couch, and was not a little shocked on seeing her eyes closed, concluding from this that she had fainted; but her easy respiration soon convinced him that this was a mistake, and he immediately concluded that the girl had deceived him. He leaned over her till she began to stir, and then retreated behind her, lest his presence, on her first awaking, should alarm her.

What took place in the interview between them has already been related. Notwithstanding appearances were so much against her, and no explanation had ensued relative to them, from the moment she asserted her innocence with solemnity, he could no longer doubt it, and, yielding at once to his conviction, to his love, to his pity for her, he again renewed his overtures for a union. Hearing of the stratagems laid for her destruction, the dangers she had escaped, the distresses she had experienced, made him more anxious than ever for completing it, that, by his constant protection, he might secure her from similar trials, and, by his tenderness and care, restore her to health, peace, and happiness. He longed for the period of her triumphing over the perfidious marchioness and the detestable lady Euphrasia, by being raised to that station they had so long attempted to prevent her attaining, and thus proving to them that virtue, sooner or later, will counteract the designs of vice. He felt a degree of rapture at the idea of his being no longer obliged to regret the ardent, the unabated affection he felt for her.

His transports were somewhat checked when she solemnly declared a union between them impossible, and

forbade his seeing her again. He was piqued by the steadiness with which she repeated this resolution, but her present weak state prevented his betraying any resentment, and he flattered himself he would be able to conquer her obstinacy: he could not now indeed despair of any event after the unexpected restoration of Amanda to his esteem, and the revival of those hopes of felicity, which, in the certainty of having lost her, had faded away.

He returned, as Johnston said, an altered man to the castle; he no longer experienced horror at entering the dressing-room, which displayed so many vestiges of his Amanda's taste.

He resolved on an immediate union, as the surest proof he could give her of his perfect confidence in her sincerity, not allowing himself to suppose she would continue firm in the resolution she had recently avowed to him. He then intended setting off for London, and sparing neither time, trouble, nor expence to obtain, from the inferior agents in the plot laid against her, a full avowal of the part they had themselves acted in it, and all they knew relative to those performed by others. This was not designed for his own satisfaction; he wanted no confirmation of what Amanda had asserted, as his meaning to marry her immediately demonstrated; it was to cover with confusion those who had meditated her destruction, and add to the horrors they would experience when they found her emerging from obscurity, not as miss Fitzalan, but lady Mortimer. Such proofs of her innocence would also prevent malice from saying he was a dupe of art, and he was convinced, for both their sakes, it was requisite to procure them; he would then avow his marriage, return for his wife, introduce her to his friends, and, if his father kept up any resentment against them longer than he expected, he knew, in lady Martha Dormer's house, and at Tudor Hall, he would find, not only an eligible, but pleasant residence. Those delightful schemes kept him awake half the night, and when he fell asleep it was only to dream of happiness and Amanda.

In the morning, notwithstanding the prohibition he had received to the contrary, he went to inquire how she was, and to try and see her. The girl who had answered his repeated knocks the preceding evening, appeared, and told him miss Fitzalan was very bad. He began to think that this must be a pretext to avoid seeing him, and, to come at the truth, was slipping a bribe into her hand, when sister Mary, who had been watching them from an adjoining room, appeared and stopped this measure. She repeated what the girl had just said, and, in addition to it, declared that, even if miss Fitzalan was up, she would not see him, and that he must come no more to St. Catharine's, as both miss Fitzalan and the prioress would resent such conduct exceedingly, and that, if he wanted to inquire after the health of the former, he might easily send a servant, and it would be much better done than to come frisking over there every moment.

Lord Mortimer was seriously displeased with this unceremonious speech. "So, I suppose," cried he, "you want to make a real nun of miss Fitzalan, and to keep her from all conversation."

"And a happy creature she would be were she to become one of us," replied sister Mary; "and as to keeping her from conversation, she might have as much as she pleased with any one. Indeed I believe the poor thing likes you well enough, the more's her misfortune for doing so."

"I thank you, madam," cried lord Mortimer; "I suppose it one of your vows to speak truth; if so, I must acknowledge you keep it religiously."

"I have just heard her," proceeded sister Mary, without minding what he said, "tell the prioress a long story about you and herself, by which I find it was her father's desire she should have nothing more to say to you, and I dare say the poor gentleman had good reasons for doing so. I beg, my lord, you will come no more here, and, indeed, I think it was a shame for you to give money to the simpleton who answered you."

Why, it was enough to turn the girl's head, and set her mad after one fal lal or other."

Lord Mortimer could not depart without one effort to win sister Mary over to his favour, and engage her to try and persuade miss Fitzalan to permit his visits; but she was inflexible. He then entreated to know if Amanda was so ill as to be unable to rise. She assured him she was; and, as some little consolation to the distress she perceived this assurance gave him, said he might send when he pleased to inquire after her health, and she would take care to answer the messenger herself.

Lord Mortimer began now to be seriously alarmed, lest captain Fitzalan had prevailed on his daughter to make a solemn renunciation of him: if this was the case, he knew nothing could prevail on her to break her promise. He was half-distracted with doubt and anxiety, which were scarcely supportable, when he reflected that they could not, for some time, be satisfied, since, even if he wrote to her for that purpose, she could not, at present, be able to answer his letter; again he felt convinced of the instability of earthly happiness, and the close connection there has ever been between pleasure and pain.

CHAP. VIII.

“Thy presence only 'tis can make me bless'd,
Heal my unquiet mind, and tune my soul.”

OTWAY'S ORPHAN.

THE fatigue, distress, and agitation of Amanda could no longer be struggled with; she sunk beneath their violence, and for a week was confined to her bed by the fever which seized her in England, and had ever since lurked in her veins. The whole sisterhood, who took it in turn to attend her, vied with each other in kindness and care to the poor invalid. Their efforts for her recovery were aided by a skilful physician from the next town, who called without being sent for at the convent. He said he had known captain Fitzalan, and that, hearing miss Fitzalan was indisposed, he had come, in hopes he might be of service to the daughter of a man he so much esteemed. He would accept of no fee, and the prioress, who was a woman of sagacity, suspected, as well as Amanda, that he came by the direction of lord Mortimer: nor were they mistaken; for, distracted with apprehensions about her, he had taken this method of lightening his fears, flattering himself, by the excellent advice he had procured, her recovery would be much expedited, and of course his suspense at least terminated. The doctor did not withdraw his visits when Amanda was able to rise; he attended her punctually, and often paid her long visits, which were of infinite service to her spirits, as he was a man of much information and cheerfulness. In a few days she was removed from her chamber into a pleasant room below stairs, which opened into the garden, where, leaning on the friendly doctor's arm, or one of the nuns, she walked at different times a few minutes each day. Lord

Mortimer, on hearing this, thought he might now solicit an interview, and accordingly wrote for that purpose.

“ TO MISS FITZALAN.

“ Lord Mortimer presents his compliments to miss Fitzalan, flatters himself she will allow him personally to express the sincere happiness her restoration to health has afforded him. He cannot think she will refuse so reasonable a request; he is almost convinced she would not hesitate a moment in granting it, could she form an idea of the misery he has experienced on her account, and the anxiety he feels, and must continue to feel, till some expressions in the last interview are explained.

“ *Castle Carberry, 10th May.*”

This letter greatly distressed Amanda. She had hoped the pain of again rejecting his visits and requests would have been spared her. She guessed at the expressions he alluded to in his letter; they were those she had dropped relative to the promise to her father, and, from the impetuous and tender feelings of lord Mortimer, she easily conceived the agony he would experience when he found this promise inviolable. She felt more for his distress than her own; her heart, seasoned in the school of adversity, could bear its sorrows with calmness; but this was not the case, and she paid the tribute of tears to a love so fervent, so faithful, and so hopeless.

She then requested sister Mary to acquaint his messenger that she received no visits; that, as she was tolerably recovered, she intreated his lordship would not take the trouble of continuing his inquiries about her health, or to send her any more written messages, as she was unable to answer them. The prioress, who was present when she received the letter, commended her exceedingly for the fortitude and discretion she had manifested. Amanda had deemed it necessary to inform her, after the conversation she heard between her and lord Mortimer, of the terms on which they stood with each other, and the prioress, who doubted whether his lordship was in reality

as honourable as he professed himself, thought Amanda on the sure side in declining his visits.

The next morning the doctor called as usual. He told Amanda he had brought her an entertaining book, for no such thing could be procured at St. Catharine's; and, as she had expressed her regret at this, from the time she had been able to read, he had supplied her from his library, which was extensive and well-chosen.

He did not present it to her till he was retiring, and then said, with a significant smile, she would find it contained something worthy of her particular attention. Amanda was alone, and immediately opened it. Great was her astonishment when a letter dropped from it into her lap! She snatched it up, and perceiving the direction in lord Mortimer's hand, she hesitated whether she should open a letter conveyed in this manner; but to return it unopened was surely a slight lord Mortimer merited not, and she broke the seal with a trembling hand and a palpitating heart.

“ Unkind Amanda,

“ To compel me to use stratagems in writing to you, and destroy the delightful hopes which had sprung in my soul at the prospect of being about to receive a reward for my sufferings. Am I ever to be involved in doubts and perplexity on your account? Am I ever to see difficulty succeeded by difficulty, and hope by disappointment?

“ You must be sensible of the anxiety I shall feel until your ambiguous expressions are fully explained, and yet you refuse this explanation! But you have no pity for my feelings. Would it not be more generous in you to permit an interview than to keep me in suspense? To know the worst is some degree of ease; besides, I should then have an opportunity of perhaps convincing you that virtue, unlike vice, has its bounds, and that we may sometimes carry our notions of honour and generosity too far, and sacrifice our real happiness to chimerical ideas of them. Surely I shall not be too presumptuous in saying, that, if the regard Amanda once flattered me with is

undiminished, she will, by rejecting a union with me, leave me not the only sufferer.

“ Oh! do not, my dear and too scrupulous girl, think a moment longer of persevering in a resolution so prejudicial to your welfare. Your situation requires particular protection: young, innocent, and beautiful, already the object of licentious pursuit, your nearest relations your greatest enemies, your brother, from his unsettled line of life, unable to be near you. Oh! my Amanda, from such a situation what evils may accrue! Avoid them by taking refuge in his arms, who will be to you a tender friend, and faithful guardian; before such evils, the obligations for keeping a promise to reject me fade away, particularly when the motives which led to such a promise are considered. Captain Fitzalan, hurt by the unfortunate letter he received from my father, extended his resentment to his son, and called upon you, without reflecting on the consequences of such a measure, to give me up. This is the only reason I can conceive for his desiring such a promise, and had I but arrived while he could have listened to my arguments, I am firmly convinced, instead of opposing, he would have sanctioned our union, and given his beloved girl to a man who, in every instance, would study to evince his gratitude for such a gift, and to supply his loss.

“ Happiness, my dear Amanda, is in long arrears with us. She is now ready to make up for past deficiencies, if it is not our own faults; let us not frighten her from performing her good intentions. but hand in hand receive the lovely and long-absent guest to our bosoms.

“ You will not, cannot, must not, be inflexible. I shall expect, as soon as you read this, a summons to St. Catharine's, to receive the ratification of my hopes; in every thing respecting our union I will be guided by you, except delaying it. What we have both suffered already from deceit, makes me doubly anxious to secure you mine, lest another vile scheme should be formed to effect our separation.

“ Oh! Amanda, the faintest prospect of calling you mine gives to my heart a felicity no language can express.

Refuse not being mine except you bring me an addition of fortune. Already rich in every virtue, I shall, in obtaining you, obtain a treasure, which the wealthiest, the proudest, and the vainest of the sons of men may envy me the possession of, and which the good, the sensible, and the elegant, must esteem the kindest gift indulgent Heaven could bestow on me. Banish all uneasy doubts and scruples, my Amanda, from your mind, nor think a promise, which was demanded without reflecting on the consequences that must attend it, can be binding. The ingenuous soul of your father would have cancelled it in a moment, had those consequences been represented to him, and now, when our own reason convinces us of them, I make no doubt, if departed souls are permitted to view the transactions of this world, his spirit would behold our union with approbation. Yes, my Amanda, I repeat, your father's approving spirit will smile upon an act which gives to his lovely and beloved orphan a faithful friend, and steady protector, in her adoring

“MORTIMER.

“*Castle Carberry, 11th May.*”

This letter deeply affected the sensibility, but could not shake the resolution of Amanda. She would not have answered it, as she considered any correspondence an infringement on the promises she had given her father to decline any further intimacy with him; but, from the warmth and agitation displayed in his letter, it was evident to her, that if he did not receive an immediate answer to it, he would come to St. Catharine's, and insist on seeing her; and she felt assured, that she would much better deliver her sentiments upon paper than to him. She accordingly wrote as follows:

“TO LORD MORTIMER.

“MR BORN,

“You cannot change my resolution. Surely, when I solemnly declare to you it is unalterable, you will spare me any further importunity on so painful a subject. In

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vain, my lord, would you, by sophistry, cloaked with tenderness for that purpose, try to influence me. The arguments you have made use of, I am convinced, you never would have adopted, had you not been mistaken in regard to those motives which prompted my father to ask a promise from me of declining any farther connection with you. It was not from resentment, my lord: no, his death was then fast approaching, and he, in charity for all mankind, forgave those who had wounded him by unjust reproach and accusation. It was a proper respect for his own character, and not resentment, which influenced his conduct; as he was convinced, if I consented to an alliance with you, lord Cherbury would be confirmed in all the suspicions he entertained of his having entangled you with me, and consequently load his memory with contempt. Tenderness, also, for me actuated him. He was acquainted with the proud heart of lord Cherbury, and knew that if, poor and reduced as I was, I entered his family, I should be considered and treated as a mean intruder. So thoroughly am I convinced that he did not err in this idea, that, whenever reason is predominant in my mind, I think, even if a promise did not exist for such a purpose, I should decline your addresses; for, though I could submit with cheerfulness to many inconveniences for your sake, I never could support indignities. We must part, my lord. Providence has appointed different paths for us to pursue in life: yours smooth and flowery, if by useless regrets you do not frustrate the intentions of the benevolent donor; mine rough and thorny. But both, though so different, will lead to the same goal, where we shall again meet to be no more separated.

“ Let not your lordship deem me either unkind or ungrateful: my heart disavows the justice of such accusations, and is but too sensible of your tenderness and generosity. Yes, my lord, I will confess, that no pang can be more pungent than the ones which now send me at being obliged to act against its feelings; but the greater the sacrifice, the greater the merit of submitting

to it, and a ray of self-approbation is, perhaps, the only sun-shine of the soul which will brighten my future days.

“Never, my lord, should I enjoy this, if my promise to my father was violated. There is but one circumstance which could set it aside, that is, having a fortune that even lord Cherbury might deem equivalent to your own to bring you; for then my father has often said he would approve our union. But this is amongst the improbabilities of this life, and we must endeavour to reconcile ourselves to the destiny which separates us.

“I hope your lordship will not attempt to see me again. You must be sensible that your visits would be highly injurious to me. Even the holy and solitary asylum which I have found, would not protect me from the malice which has already been so busy with my peace and fame. Alas! I now need the utmost vigilance; deprived as I am of those on whom I had claims of protection, it behoves me to exert the utmost circumspection in my conduct. He in whom I expected to have found a guardian, Oscar, my dear unfortunate brother, is gone I know not whither, persecuted and afflicted by the monster who has been such a source of misery to me. Oh! my lord, when I think what his sufferings may now be, my heart sinks within me. Oh! had I been the only sufferer, I should not have felt so great a degree of agony as I now endure. But I will not despair about my dear Oscar: the Providence which has been so kind to his sister, which so unexpectedly raised her friends, at the moment she deemed herself deprived of all earthly comfort, may to him have been equally merciful. I have trespassed a long time upon your lordship's attention, but I wished to be explicit, to avoid the necessity of any further correspondence between us. You now know my resolves; you also know my feelings; in pity to them spare me any further conflicts. May the tranquil happiness you so truly deserve soon be yours! Do not, my lord, because disappointed in one wish, lose your sense of the many valuable blessings with which you are surrounded; in fulfilling the claims which your friends, your country have upon you, you will show how truly you merit those bless-

sings, and banish all useless regrets from your heart. Adieu, my lord; suffer no uneasiness on my account; if Heaven prolong my life, I have no doubt but I shall find a little comfortable shelter from the world; where, conscious I have acted according to my principles of right, I shall enjoy the serenity which ever attends self-approbation; a serenity which no changes or chances in this life will, I trust, ever wrest from

“AMANDA FITZALAN.”

“*May 12th. St. Catharine's.*”

She dispatched this by an old man, who was employed in the garden at St. Catharine's; but her spirits were so much affected by writing it, she was obliged to go up and lie on the bed. She considered herself as having taken a final adieu of Lord Mortimer, and the idea was too painful to be supported with fortitude; tender and fervent as his attachment was now to her, she believed the hurry and bustle of the world, in which he must be engaged, would soon eradicate it; a transfer of his affections to one equal to himself in rank and fortune was a probable event, and of course a total expulsion of her from his memory would follow; - a deadly coldness stole upon her heart at the idea of being forgotten by him, and produced a flood of tears. She then began to accuse herself of inconsistency. She had often thought, if Lord Mortimer was restored to happiness, she should feel more tranquillity; and now when the means of effecting this restoration occurred, she trembled and lamented as if it would increase her misery. “I am selfish,” said she to herself, “in desiring the prolongation of an affection which must ever be hopeless; I am weak, in regretting the probability of its transfer, as I can never return it.”

To conquer these feelings, she found she must banish Lord Mortimer from her thoughts. Except she succeeded in some degree in this, she felt she never should be able to exert the fortitude her present situation demanded. She now saw a probability of her existence being

prolonged, and the bread of idleness or dependence could never be sweet to Amanda Fitzalan.

She had lain about an hour on the bed, and was about rising, and returning to the parlour, when sister Mary entered the chamber, and delivered her a letter. Ere Amanda looked at the superscription her agitated heart foretold her whom it came from. She was not mistaken in her conjecture; but as she held it in her hand, she hesitated whether she should open it or not. "Yet," said she to herself, "it can be no great harm; he cannot, after what I have declared, suppose my resolution to be shaken. He writes to assure me of his perfect acquiescence to it." Sister Mary left her at the instant her deliberations ended, by opening the letter.

" TO MISS FITZALAN.

"Inexorable Amanda! But I will spare both you and myself the pain of farther importunity. All I now request is, that for three months longer at least you will continue at St. Catharine's, or that, if you find a much longer residence there unpleasant, you will, on quitting it, leave directions where to be found. Ere half the above-mentioned period elapsed, I trust, I shall be able satisfactorily to account for such a request. I am quitting Castle Carberry immediately. I shall leave it with a degree of tranquillity that would perhaps surprise you, after what has so lately passed, if in this one instance you will oblige your

" Ever faithful

" MORTIMER."

This laconic letter astonished Amanda. By its style it was evident lord Mortimer had recovered his cheerfulness; recovered it, not from a determination of giving her up, but from a hope of their again meeting, as they could both wish. A sudden transport rushed upon her heart at such an idea, but quickly died away when she reflected it was almost beyond the possibility of things to bring about a pleasing interview between them. She knew lord Mortimer had a sanguine temper, and, though

it might mislead him, she resolved it should not mislead her. She could not form the most distant surmise of what he had now in agitation; but, whatever it was, she firmly believed it would end in disappointment. To refuse every request of his was painful, but propriety demanded she should not accede to the last; for one step, she wisely considered, from the line of prudence she had marked out for herself to take, might plunge her in difficulties from which she would find it impossible to extricate herself. With an unsteady hand she returned the following answer:

“ TO LORD MORTIMER.”

“ *My Lord,*

“ I cannot comply with your request: you may, if you please, repeat inexorable Amanda: I had rather incur the imputation of obstinacy than imprudence, and think it much better to meet your accusation than deserve my own. How long I may reside at St. Catharine’s is to myself unknown; when I quit it, I certainly will not promise to leave any directions where you may find me.

“ The obstacles which have rendered our separation necessary, are, I am convinced, beyond your lordship’s power to conquer: except they were removed, any farther interviews between us would be foolish and imprudent in the extreme. I also rejoice to hear you are leaving the castle, but am not surprised to hear of your tranquillity. From your good sense I expected you would make exertions against useless regrets, and those exertions I knew would be attended with success; but, as some return for the sincere pleasure I feel for your restoration to tranquillity, seek not to disturb again that of

“ AMANDA FITZALAN.”

“ *May 12th. St. Catharine’s.*”

Scarcely had she sealed this letter when she was called to dinner; but though she obeyed the summons, she could not eat. The exertions her writing to lord Mortimer required, and the agitation his letter had thrown

her into, quite exhausted her strength and spirits. The nuns withdrew soon after dinner, and left her alone with the prioress. In a few minutes after their departure, the old gardener returned from Castle Carberry, where he had been delivering her letter. After informing her he had put it safely into his lordship's hands, he added with a look which seemed to indicate a fear lest she should be distressed, that he had received neither letter or message from him, though he waited a long time in expectation of receiving either one or the other; but he supposed, he said, his lordship was in too great a hurry just then to give any answer, as a chaise and four was waiting to carry him to Dublin.

Amanda burst into tears as the man retired from the room. She saw she had written to lord Mortimer for the last time, and she could not suppress this tribute of regret. She was firmly convinced, indeed, she should behold him no more. The idea of visiting her, she was sure, nay she hoped, he would relinquish, when he found (which she supposed would soon be the case) the schemes or hopes which now buoyed up his spirits impossible to be realized.

The prioress sympathized in her sorrow; though not from her own experience, yet, from the experience of others, she knew how dangerous and bewitching a creature man is, and how difficult it is to remove the chains which he twines around the female heart; to remove those which lay so heavy upon the delicate and susceptible heart of her young friend, without leaving a corrosive wound, was her sincere wish, and, by strengthening her resolution, she hoped success would crown their endeavours.

Two hours were elapsed since her messenger's return from the castle, when sister Mary entered the room with a large packet, which she put into Amanda's hands, saying, it was given her by lord Mortimer's servant, who rode off the moment he delivered it.

Sister Mary made no scruple of saying, she should like to know what such a weighty packet contained. The prioress chid her in a laughing manner for her

curiosity, and drew her into the garden, to give Amanda an opportunity of examining the contents.

She was surprised on breaking the seal, to perceive a very handsome pocket-book in a blank cover, and found, unsealed, a letter to this effect :

“ TO MISS FITZALAN.

“ I have put it out of your power to return this, by departing long ere you receive it. Surely, if you have the laudable pride you profess, you will not hesitate to use the contents of the pocket-book, as the only means of avoiding a weight of obligations from strangers ; though discarded as a lover, surely I may be esteemed as a friend ; and with such a title I will be contented till I can lay claim to a tenderer one. You start at this last expression, and I have no doubt you will call me a romantic visionary, for entertaining hopes which you have so positively assured me can never be realized ; but ere I resign them I must have something more powerful than this assurance, my sweet Amanda, to convince me of their fallacy. I was inexpressibly shocked this morning to learn, by your letter, that your brother had met with misfortune. My blood boils with indignation against the monster who has, to use your emphatical expression, been such a source of misery to you both. I shall make it my particular care to try and discover the place to which Mr. Fitzalan is gone, and in what situation. By means of the agents, or some of the officers belonging to the regiment, I flatter myself with being able to gain some intelligence of him ; I need not add, that, to the utmost extent of my power, I will serve him. My success in this affair, as well as in that which concerns a much dearer being, you may be convinced you shall soon hear. Adieu, my Amanda. I cannot say, like Hamlet, “ Go, get ye to a nunnery ;” but, I can say—“ Stay there, I charge you.” Seriously, I could wish, except you find your present situation very unpleasant and inconvenient, not to change it for a short time. I think, for a temporary abode, you could not find a more eligible one, and, as I shall be all impatience when I hear of you

Ireland to see you, a search after you would be truly insupportable. You have already refused to inform me of your determination relative to this matter; surely I may venture to request it may be as I wish, when I assure you that, except I can see you in a manner pleasing to both, I never will force into your presence him, who, let things turn out as they may, must ever continue

“Your faithful

“MORTIMER.”

“Gracious Heaven!” said Amanda to herself, “what can he mean? what scheme can he have in agitation which will remove the obstacles to our union? He here seems to speak of a certainty of success. Oh! grant, merciful Power!” she continued, raising her meek eyes to Heaven, while a rosy blush stole upon her cheeks, “grant that indeed he may be successful. He talks of returning to Ireland. Still,” proceeded she, reading over the letter, “requiring something more powerful than my assurance to convince him of the fallacy of his hopes; surely Lord Mortimer would not be so cruel as to raise expectations in my bosom, without those in his own were well founded. No, dear Mortimer, I will not call you a romantic visionary, but the most amiable, the most generous of men, who for poor Amanda encounters difficulties, and sacrifices every splendid expectation.” She rejoiced at the intention he had declared of seeking out Oscar. She looked forward either to a speedy interview, or speedy intelligence of this beloved brother, as she knew Lord Mortimer would seek him with the persevering spirit of benevolence, and leave no means untried to restore him to her.

She now examined the contents of the pocket-book; it contained a number of small bills, to the amount of two hundred pounds; a large present, but one so delicately presented, that even her ideas of propriety could scarcely raise a scruple against her accepting it. They did, however, suggest one: uncertain how matters would

yet terminate between her and lord Mortimer, she was unwilling to receive any pecuniary obligations from him; but, when she reflected on his noble and feeling heart, she knew she should severely wound it by returning his present; she therefore resolved on keeping it, making a kind of compromise with her feelings about the matter, by determining that, except entitled to receive them, she would never more accept favours of this nature from his lordship.

The present one indeed was a most seasonable relief, and removed from her heart a load of anxiety which had weighed on it. After paying her father's funeral expences, the people with whom he lodged, and the apothecary who had attended him, she found herself mistress of but twenty guineas in the whole world, and more than half of this she considered as already due to the benevolent sisters of St. Catharine's, who were ill able to afford any additional expence.

She had resolved to force them to accept what indeed she deemed a poor return for their kindness to her, and she then intended to retire to some obscure hovel in the neighbourhood, as better suited to the state of her finances, and continue there till her health was sufficiently restored, to enable her to make exertions for her livelihood; but she shuddered at the idea of leaving St. Catharine's and residing amongst a set of boors; she felt sensations something similar to those we may suppose a person would feel, who was about being committed to a tempestuous ocean, without any means of security.

Lord Mortimer had prevented the necessity which had prompted her to think of a removal, and she now resolved to reside at least for the time he had mentioned in the convent, during which she supposed her uncertainties relative to him would be over, and that, if it was not her fate to be his, she should, by the perfect re-establishment of her health, be enabled to use her abilities in the manner her situation required. Tears of heart-felt gratitude and sensibility flowed down her cheeks for him who had tightened her mind of the care which had so oppressed it.

She at length recollected the prioress had retired into the garden from complaisance to her, and yet continued in it, waiting, no doubt, to be summoned back by her. She hastily wiped away her tears, and folding up the precious letter, which was bedewed with them, repaired to the garden, resolving not to communicate its contents, as the divulgement of expectations (considering how liable all human ones are to be disappointed) she ever considered a piece of folly.

She found the prioress and sister Mary seated under a broken and ivy-covered arch. "Jesu! my dear," said the latter, "I thought you would never come to us. Our good mother has been keeping me here in spite of my teeth, though I told her the sweet cakes I made for tea would be burned by this time, and that, supposing you were reading a letter from lord Mortimer, there could be no harm in my seeing you." Amanda relieved the impatient Mary, and she took her seat. The prioress cast her piercing eyes upon her. She perceived she had been weeping, and that joy rather than sorrow caused her tears. She was too delicate to inquire into its source; but she took Amanda's hand, and gave it a pressure, which seemed to say; "I see, my dear child, you have met with something which pleases you, and my heart sympathizes as much in your happiness as in your grief."

Amanda returned the affectionate pressure with one equally tender, and a starting tear. They were soon called by sister Mary to partake of her hot cakes, which she had made indeed in hopes of tempting Amanda to eat after her bad dinner; the whole community were assembled at tea, when the doctor entered the parlour. Amanda blushed and looked grave at his first entrance; but he soon rallied her out of her gravity, and when the prioress and the nuns, according to custom, had withdrawn to evening vespers, he said, with a significant smile, "he feared she had not attended as much as he wished she should to the contents of the book he had last brought her." She saw by his manner he was acquainted with her situation relative to lord Mortimer, and therefore

replied by saying, "that, perhaps, if he knew the motives which influenced her conduct, he would not think her wrong in disregarding what he had just mentioned." She also said, "she detested all kinds of stratagems, and was really displeased with him for practising one upon her."

"In a good cause," he said, "he should never hesitate using one. Lord Mortimer was the finest young fellow he had ever seen, and had won his favour, and the best wishes of his heart, from the first moment that he beheld him. He made me contrive," continued the doctor, "a story to gain admission to your ladyship, and when I found him so dreadfully anxious about you, I gave you credit (as I had then no opportunity of judging for myself) for all the virtues and graces he ascribed to you, and which I have since perceived you to possess. You smile, and look as if you would call me a flatterer; seriously I assure you I am not one: I really think you worthy of lord Mortimer, and, I assure you, that is as great a compliment as could be paid any woman. His mind was troubled with grief; he revealed his troubles and perplexities to me, and, after hearing them, no good christian ever prayed more devoutly for another, than I prayed for your recovery, that all your sorrows, like a novel, might terminate in marriage."

"You are obliging in your wishes," said Amanda, smiling.

"Faith, I am sincere in them," exclaimed he, "and do not know when I have been so disconcerted at things not turning out smoothly between you and his lordship; but I will not despair: in all my own troubles, and Heaven has given me my share, I ever looked to the bright side of things, and shall always do so for my friends. I yet expect to see you settled at Castle Carberry, and to be appointed myself physician-general to your ladyship's household." The mention of an event, yet so uncertain, greatly agitated Amanda; she blushed and turned pale alternately, and convinced her good-natured, but loquacious friend, he had touched a chord which could not bear vibration. He hastily changed the discourse, and

As soon as he saw her composed, rose to take his leave. Amanda detained him for a minute, to try and prevail on him to take a ten-guinea note; but he was inflexible, and said, with some archness, "till the disorder which preyed upon lord Mortimer's heart was in some degree alleviated, he would receive no recompence for his visits, which, he assured Amanda, from time to time he should continue to pay her; adding, a certain person had enjoined him now and then to take a peep within the holy walls of St. Catharine's."

The next morning Amanda set about a temporary arrangement of her affairs. She presented thirty guineas to the sisterhood, which, with much difficulty, she forced them to accept, though, in reality, it was much required by them; but when she came to speak of paying for a continuance, they positively declared they would agree to no such thing, as she had already so liberally rewarded them for any expence they had incurred on her account. She told them, that if they would not agree to be paid for lodging and board, she would certainly leave them, though such a step was contrary to her inclinations; she assured them also, she was at present well able to pay.

At last it was settled she should give them at the rate of forty pounds a-year, a salary they thought extremely ample, considering the plain manner in which they lived. She then had all the things which belonged to her father and herself brought to the convent, and had the former, with whatever she did not immediately want, nailed up in a large chest, that on a short notice they might be removed. Her harp and guitar she had in her distress proposed sending back to the person in Dublin from whom they were purchased, to sell for her; but she now determined to keep those presents of her beloved father's, except again urged by necessity to part with them. She had a variety of materials for painting and working, and proposed employing herself in executing pieces in each way, not only as a means of amusing her time, but as a resource on an evil day: thus wisely making use of the present sunshine, lest another storm should arise, which she should not be so well able to struggle against.

CHAP. V.

In struggling with misfortunes
Lies the proof of virtue.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE turbulence of grief, and the agitation of suspense, gradually lessened in the mind of Amanda, and were succeeded by a soft and pleasing melancholy, which sprang from the consciousness of having always, to the best of her abilities, performed the duties imposed upon her, and supported her misfortunes with placid resignation. She loved to think of her father, for amidst her sighs for his loss were mingled the delightful ideas of having ever been a source of comfort to him, and she believed, if departed spirits were allowed to review this world, his would look down upon her with delight and approbation, at beholding her undeviating in the path he marked out for her to take; the calm derived from such meditations she considered as a recompence for many sorrows; it was such indeed as nothing earthly gives, or can destroy, and what the good must ever experience, though "amidst the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds."

She tried to prevent her thoughts from wandering to lord Mortimer, as the surest means of retaining her composure, which fled whenever she reflected on the doubtful balance in which her fate yet hung concerning him.

The solitude of St. Catharine's was well adapted to her present situation and frame of mind. She was neither teized with impertinent or unmeaning ceremony, but, perfect mistress of her own time and actions, read, worked, and walked, as most agreeable to herself. She did not extend her walks beyond the convent, as the scenes around it would awaken remembrances she had

not sufficient fortitude to bear; but the space it covered was ample enough to afford her many different and extensive rambles; and of a still evening, when nothing but the lowing of the cattle, or the buzzing of the summer flies, was to be heard, she loved to wander through the solemn and romantic ruins, sometimes accompanied by a nun, but much oftener alone.

A fortnight had elapsed in this manner since lord Mortimer's departure, when one morning a carriage was heard driving across the common, and stopping at the outer gate of St. Catharine's: Amanda, who was sitting at work in the parlour with the prioress, started in a universal trepidation at the sound; it may be easily imagined the idea of lord Mortimer was uppermost in her thoughts. The door opened in a few minutes, and, to her great astonishment, Mrs Kilcorban and her two daughters made their appearance.

Agitation and surprise prevented Amanda from speaking; she courtesied, and motioned them to be seated. The young ladies saluted her with an icy civility, and the mother treated her with a rude familiarity, which she thought herself authorized in using to one so reduced in her circumstances as Amanda. "Dear me," cried she, "you can't think, child, how shocked we have all been to hear of your misfortunes! We only returned to the country yesterday, for we have been in town the whole winter, and to be sure a most delightful winter we have had of it, such balls, such routs, such racketings; but, as I was going to say, as soon as we came home, I began, according to my old custom, to inquire after all my neighbours, and, to be sure, the very first thing I heard was of the poor captain's death. Don't cry, my dear, we must all go one time or another; those are things of course, as the doctor says in his sermon; so when I heard of your father's death, and your distress, I began to cast about in my brain some plan for helping you, and at last I hit upon one, which, says I to the girls, will delight the poor soul, as it will give her an opportunity of earning decent bread for herself. You must know, my dear, the tutoress we brought to town

would not come back with us—a dirty trollop, by the bye, and I think her place would be quite the thing for you. You will have the four young girls to learn French, and work to, and I will expect you, as you have a good taste, to assist the eldest miss Kilcorban in making up their things and dressing. I give twenty guineas a year. When we have no company, the prioress always sits at the table, and gets, besides this, the best of treatment in every respect."

A blush of indignation had gradually conquered Amanda's paleness, during Mrs. Kilcorban's long and eloquent speech—"Your intentions may be friendly, madam," cried she, "but I must decline your proposal."

"Bless me, and why must you decline it? Perhaps you think yourself not qualified to instruct; indeed this may be the case, for people often get credit for accomplishments they do not possess. Well, if this is so, I am still content to take you, as you were always a decent behaved young body. Indeed you cannot expect I should give you twenty guineas a year; no, no, I must make some abatement in the salary, if I am forced to get masters to help you in learning the girls. "Miss Fitzalan, madam," exclaimed the prioress, who had hitherto continued silent, "never got credit for accomplishments which she did not possess; her modesty has rather obscured than blazoned forth her perfections; she does not, therefore, madam, decline your offer from a consciousness of inability to undertake the office of an instructor, but from a conviction she never could support impertinence and folly; should her situation ever require her to exert her talents for subsistence, I trust she will never experience the mortification of associating with those who are insensible of her worth, or unwilling to pay her the respect she merits."

"Coity toity," cried Mrs. Kilcorban, "what assurance! Why, madam, many a better man's child would have jumped at such an offer."

"Dear madam," said miss Kilcorban, "perhaps the young lady has a better settlement in view. We forget lord Mortimer has been lately at Castle Carberry,

and we all know his lordship is a friend to captain Fitzalan's daughter."

"Or, perhaps," cried miss Alicia, in a giggling tone, "she means to be a nun."

"Indeed, I suppose she means to be nothing good," rejoined miss Kilcorban; "and I suppose it was by some impertinence or other she had a tiff with Lady Greystock. Lord! (looking round the room) only see her music books—her harp—her guitar—as if she had nothing to do but sing and thrum away the whole day. Well, miss," rising from her chair, "you may yet be sorry your friend said so much about you. I did not come merely to offer to take you into my house, but to offer you also a good sum for your harp and guitar, supposing you had no business with such things now-a-days; but I dare say you would have refused this offer."

"I certainly should, madam," said Amanda; "it must be strong necessity which compels me to part with my beloved father's presents."

"Well, well, child, I wish this pride of thine may not yet be humbled." So saying she flounced out of the room, followed by her daughters, who, under an affectation of contempt, evidently showed they were chagrined by the reception they had met.

The prioress indulged herself in a long fit of laughter, at the passion in which she had thrown Mrs. Kilcorban; and Amanda, who considered the lady and her daughters as the most insignificant of beings, soon recovered from the discomposure their visit had occasioned.

In the course of the evening a letter was delivered her by the servant, who said the messenger who brought it waited for an answer. Amanda, in a universal trepidation, broke the seal; but, instead of lord Mortimer's, as she expected, a hand, to her entirely new, struck her view.

“ TO MISS FITZALAN.

“ *My Dear Creature,*

“ I think I never was so diverted in my life as at the account my mother and sisters gave of the reception they met with from you to-day at St. Catharine's. I vow to God it was excellent ; nor can I help still wondering at their absurdity, in thinking such a devilish fine girl as you are would sacrifice your time in instructing a parcel of chits, when it can be devoted to so much better a purpose ! To be brief, my dear girl, I will take you immediately under my protection ; if not your own fault, bring you to Dublin, settle you in elegant lodgings, with a handsome allowance, and not only make you, but declare you to be the grand sultana of my affection, a situation which, I can assure you, you will not be a little envied enjoying. In your answer to this, I shall expect to hear when I may have the felicity of bringing you from obscurity, to the brilliant scene you were formed to ornament. Adieu, my dear.

“ Believe me your devoted

“ B. KILCORBAN.”

The indignation which filled Amanda's breast, at reading this scroll, cannot be expressed. Her blood seemed to boil in her veins ; it was some time ere she could sufficiently compose herself to acquaint the prioress, with the cause of her agitation ; it was then agreed that the letter should be returned, with the following lines written on it :

“ The author of this effusion of ignorance and impertinence has already inspired all the contempt he merits ; should he repeat his insolence, something even more mortifying than contempt, chastisement, must ensue.”

That a repetition of this kind would be the case, she did not believe. From Kilcorban, she had no reason to suspect either the perseverance or designs of Belgrave :

one was a libertine from principle, the other she believed from fashion, and that to pique his pride would be a sure method of getting rid of him.

But the calm she had for some time experienced was destined to be interrupted. The next morning brought father O'Gallaghan, the little fat priest (of whom we have made mention before in our pages), to the convent; he was not the officiating priest, but, notwithstanding this, paid many visits to his sisterhood, with whom he was a great favourite; he had been much concerned about Amanda's illness. She was sitting alone in the parlour, drawing, when he entered it. He seated himself by her, and the expression of his countenance seemed to declare his heart was brimful of something pleasant.

"You won't be offended now, my dear sowl," said he, smirking up in her face, "with a body for asking you how you would like to leave this dismal solitude, and have a comfortable home of your own, where you might see your own friends, and have every thing warm and cosy about you?"

"Why," said Amanda, "though I do not consider this a dismal solitude, yet, to be sure, I should have no objection to a pleasant settled habitation."

"Ay, I always thought you a sensible young body. Well, and what would you say to the person then, who could point out such a habitation; ay, you little rogue, who could say they had just such a one in their eye for you?"

Amanda stared at him with astonishment. She had at first believed him jesting, but now found him serious.

"Ay, faith, my dear creature," cried he, continuing his discourse, with a look of the most perfect satisfaction, "I have an offer to make you, which I believe would make many girls jump out of their skins with joy to hear."

"You remember the O'Flanaghans, I am sure, where you took tea last summer. Well, the eldest of the sons (as honest a lad as ever broke bread) cast a sheep's eye upon you then; but what with your going from the country, and some other matters, he thought there was no use then in revealing his flame; but now, when you

are come plump in his way again, faith he plucked up his courage, and told his father all about it. Old Flanagan is a good-natured sowl, and is very willing the match should take place. They have every thing snug about them. The old man will give every thing into your spouse's hands; the youngest son will live in the house till he gets married, and goes off to a farm of his own; the eldest daughter is married; the second will live with her, and the youngest will be a little handy assistant to you: so you see you will not be tormented with a large family. There is one little matter, which, to be sure, they are a little uneasy about, and that is, your being of different persuasions; but, says I to them, when this was stated—faith, says I, you need not give yourself any trouble about it, for I know the young woman to be a discreet sowl, and I am sure she will make no hesitation about going to chapel instead of church, when she knows, too, it is for her own interest. So, my dear sowl, I hope soon to give you the nuptial benediction, and to be also your spiritual director."

Amanda had listened to his speech in silent amazement. She now rose, and would have quitted the room without speaking, to evince her contempt, had not an idea darted into her mind, that such conduct, perhaps, might not be construed by the ignorant priest in the manner she wished; she therefore stopped, and turning to him said, "He could not wonder at her being offended at his pretending to answer so freely for her, in matters so important as religion; but to prove how presumptuous he was in every thing he said about her, she must assure him, his embassy to her was equally fruitless and disagreeable; and that if Mr. O'Flanagan consulted his own happiness, he would seek to unite himself with a woman brought up in his own sphere of life." So saying, she quitted the room, with a look of dignity, which quite confounded the poor priest, who snatched up his hat in a great hurry, and waddled away to the farm, to communicate the ill success of his visit, which had quite crushed his expectations of wedding presents, and pud-

ding feasts, which he had contemplated in idea with delight.

It was some time ere Amanda recovered from the discomposure into which the impertinence of the Kilcorbans and the priest had thrown her. From what she suffered in consequence of it, she was forcibly convinced how ill qualified she was to struggle with a world where she would be continually liable to such shocks: she had yet a hope of escaping them—a hope of being guarded by the tutelary care of lord Mortimer, and of being one of the happiest of her sex.

CHAP. VI.

Lo! I am here to answer to ^{our} vows,
And be the meeting fortunate! I come
With joyful tidings—we shall part no more.

PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

BUT a shock more severe than those she had lately experienced, was yet in store for our hapless heroine. About a fortnight after the visit of the Kilcorbans and the priest, as she was rambling one evening, according to custom, amongst the solitary ruins of St. Catharine's, indulging the pensive meditations of her soul, the figure of a man suddenly darted from under a broken arch, and discovered to her view the features of the hated Belgrave. Amanda gave a faint cry, and in unutterable dismay tottered back a few paces against a wall. "Cruel Amanda," exclaimed Belgrave, while his look seemed to imply he would take advantage of her situation; his look, his voice operated like a charm to rouse her from the kind of stupefaction into which she had fallen at first sight of him, and as he attempted to lay hold of her, she sprang past him, and with a swiftness which mocked his speed, flew through the intricate

windings of the place till she reached the convent. Her pale and distracted look, as she rushed into the prioress's apartment, terrified the good old lady, who hastily interrogated her as to the cause of her disorder; but Amanda was unable to speak. The appearance of Belgrave she thought an omen of every ill to her. Her blood ran cold through her veins at his sight, and terror totally subdued her powers. The prioress summoned sister Mary to her relief; drops and water were administered, and the overloaded heart of the trembling Amanda was relieved by tears. The prioress again asked the cause of her agitation; but perceiving Amanda did not like to speak before sister Mary, she immediately pretended to think it proceeded from fatigue; and Mary, who was simplicity itself, readily credited the idea. The prioress soon sent her, upon some pretext, from the room, and then, in the gentlest terms, begged to know what had so cruelly alarmed her young friend. Amanda had already confided to the prioress the events of her life, so that the good lady, on hearing Belgrave now mentioned, no longer wondered at the agitation of Amanda; yet as her fears, she saw, were too powerful for her reason, she endeavoured to convince her they were unnecessary. She called to her remembrance the singular protection she had already experienced from Heaven, and the protection which, while she was innocent, she would still have a right to expect. She also mentioned the security of her present situation, encompassed by friends whose integrity could not be warped, and whose utmost zeal would be manifested in defeating any stratagems which might be laid against her.

Amanda grew composed as she listened to the prioress; she was cheered by the voice of piety and friendship, and her heart again felt firm and elevated. She acknowledged, that after the singular, nay almost miraculous interpositions of Providence she had experienced in her favour, to give way to terror or despair was sinful, since it showed a distrust of the Power, who has promised, with guardian care, to watch the footsteps of the innocent.

It was however agreed, that Amanda should venture no more from the convent, but confine her rambles to the garden, which was enclosed with a high wall, and had no places of concealment. Five weeks yet remained of the period lord Mortimer had requested her to stay at St. Catharine's; before it was expired, she trusted and believed, Belgrave would be weary of watching her, and would decamp; if then she neither saw nor heard from lord Mortimer, she resolved to relinquish all hope concerning him, and immediately think upon some plan which should put her in a way of procuring subsistence.

Her paintings and embroidery still went on; she had executed some elegant pictures in both, which, if obliged to dispose of, she was sure would fetch a good price; yet, whenever compelled by reflection to this idea, the tear of tender melancholy would fall upon her lovely cheek, a tear which was ever hastily wiped away, while she endeavoured to fortify her mind with pious resignation to whatever should be her future fate.

Three weeks more elapsed without any event to discompose their tranquillity; but as the termination of the destined period approached, the agitation of Amanda, in spite of all her efforts to the contrary, increased; she deemed the awful crisis of her fate at hand, and she trembled at the reflection.

She now, for the first time, avoided solitude; she wanted to fly from herself, and sat constantly with the prioress, who had nothing of the gloomy recluse, save the habit, about her.

They were chatting together one evening after tea, when sister Mary entered the room, bearing a large packet, which she rather tossed, than presented to Amanda, exclaiming, "From lord Mortimer. I wish the troublesome fellow had not come back again; here we shall have him frisking or storming continually, and again plaguing us out of our lives."

"From lord Mortimer!" exclaimed Amanda, starting from her chair, and clasping the letter between her hands; "Oh! gracious heaven!" She said no more, but flew from the room to her chamber. She tore open the seal;

the envelope contained two letters; the first was directed in a hand unknown to her; her heart sickened as she dropped it on the ground; the other was the superscription of lord Mortimer. She opened it with revived spirits, and read as follows:

“ TO MISS FITZALAN.

“ I am returned, returned to tell my Amanda, that nothing but the awful fiat of heaven shall part us more. Yes, my love, a sweet reward for all our difficulties, our trials, let me add, our persevering constancy, is at hand, and one name, one interest, one fate, I trust, will soon be ours.”

Tears of joy gushed from Amanda, as she exclaimed, “ Can this, this be true? Is lord Mortimer, so long, so hopelessly beloved, indeed returned to tell me we shall part no more? 'Tis true, 'tis true, and never can my grateful heart sufficiently acknowledge the goodness it experiences: but how was this event brought about?” She wiped away her tears, and resumed the letter.

“ Your solemn refusal to unite yourself to me threw me into agonies; but true love, like true courage, will never despair, will never yield to difficulties, without first trying every effort to conquer them: I soon, therefore, roused myself from the heavy weight which oppressed my spirits at your resolution, and, ere long, conceived a project so feasible, so almost certain of success, that my impatience to realize it cannot be described; yet you may conceive some idea of it from the abrupt manner in which I quitted Castle Carberry, without desiring to bid you adieu; but, ere it could be accomplished, I plainly saw I had many difficulties to encounter—difficulties which it was absolutely essential to overcome, that I might prove to the world I was not the dupè of love, but the friend, the lover, and the vindicator of real innocence and virtue. From what I have said, you may suppose the difficulties I allude to were such as I expected to encounter, in my attempt to unravel the whole of the deep and execrable plot which involved you in a

situation so distressing to your feelings, and injurious to your character; and, oh! with what mingled pride and pleasure did I meditate on being your champion, clearing your fame from each dark aspersion, and proving, clearly proving, that your mind was as lovely, as angelic as your person.

“ I was happy, on my arrival in London, to find lady Martha Dormer still at lord Cherbury's house. I have already told you that I left town on pretence of visiting my sister in Wales. My father, I soon perceived, suspected that had not been the real motive of my departure; but I soon perceived he did not desire to reveal his suspicions, as he asked me some questions concerning lady Araminta, which, you may be sure, I answered awkwardly enough, and had a comic writer been present, he might have taken the hint of a good blundering scene from us both.

“ The marquis of Rosline and his family, I learned, continued at his villa. Their absence from town rejoiced me, as it not only exempted me from society I abhorred, but as it gave me an opportunity of interrogating their household, amongst whom I was convinced I should discover the trusty agents the amiable marchioness had made use of, in her scheme against you. The morning after my arrival, I accordingly set off to Portman-square. The man who opened the door knew me not, which I considered a lucky circumstance, for not being able to mention my name to the housekeeper, whom I desired him to send to me, she was not as much on her guard as she would otherwise have been. She started as she entered the parlour, and lifted up her hands and eyes with unfeigned astonishment. Soon, however, recovering herself, she addressed me in the most obsequious manner, and spoke as if she supposed I was come purposely to inquire after her lord and lady: an artful way of trying to terminate her own suspense, by fearing the nature of my visit. I soon gave her to understand it was not of the most amicable kind to her: I came, I said, to demand either the letter, or an account of the letter which

I had entrusted to her care for miss Fitzalan, which contained a note of large value, and which I found had never been received by that young lady. Her countenance in a moment condemned her: it spoke stronger than a thousand tongues against her. She first grew deadly pale, then fiery red, trembled, faltered, and hung her head, to avoid my eyes. Her looks, I told her, confirmed the suspicions I was forced to entertain of her integrity; yet, shocking as the action was which she had committed, being not only a breach of trust, but humanity, I was willing to come to an easy and private accommodation about it, provided she would truly and fully confess the part she had taken, or knew others to have taken, in injuring miss Fitzalan, while she resided in the marquis's house, by bringing colonel Belgrave into it. I paused for her reply. She appeared as if considering how she should act. I thought I saw something yielding in her face, and, eager to take advantage of it, I proceeded: What I have already said, I am going again to repeat; that is, if you confess all you know relative to the plot which was contrived and carried into execution in this house against miss Fitzalan, I will settle every thing relative to the letter and its contents in a manner pleasing to you. Her innocence is unquestioned by me; but it is essential to her peace that it should also be so to the rest of her friends, and they who regard her welfare will liberally reward those whose allegations shall justify her.

“ Upon this, she turned to me, with a countenance of the utmost effrontery, and said she would not tell a lie to please any one. I will not shock you by repeating all she said. She ended by saying, as to the letters, she set me at defiance; true, I had given her one for miss Fitzalan; but I might remember miss Fitzalan was in the room on the ground at the time; and she had called in other servants to her assistance, she said; and in the hurry and bustle which ensued, she knew not what became of it; others might as well be called upon as her. I could no longer command my temper: I told her she was a wretch, and only fit for the diabolical service in which she was

employed. The note which I enclosed in the letter I had given her for you, I had received from my father's agent in the country; as a post-note I had endorsed it, and taken the number in my pocket-book; I therefore left Portman-square with a resolution of going to the bank, and, if not already received, stopping payment; I stepped into the first hackney-coach I met, and had the satisfaction of finding it had not been offered at the bank. I suspected she would be glad to exchange it for cash as soon as possible, and, therefore, left my direction, as well as a request for the detention of any person who should present it.

“In consequence of this, a clerk came the following morning, to inform me a woman had presented the note at the bank, and was, agreeably to my request, detained till I appeared. I immediately returned with him, and had the satisfaction of seeing the housekeeper caught in the snare. She burst into tears at my appearance, and coming up to me, in a low voice said, if I would have mercy upon her, she would in return make a full confession of all she knew about the affair I had mentioned to her yesterday.

“I told her, though she deserved no mercy, yet, as I had promised on such condition to show her lenity, I would not violate my word. I received the note, sent for a coach, and, handing the lady into it, soon conveyed her to Portman-square. She no sooner entered the parlour than she fell on her knees, and besought my forgiveness. I bid her rise, and lose no time in revealing all she knew concerning the scheme against you. She then confessed that both she and Mrs. Jane, the attendant who had been placed about your person, were acquainted and concerned in all the contrivances the marchioness had laid against you, who scrupled not to acknowledge to them the inveterate hatred she bore you. Their scruples (for they pretended to have some in abetting her schemes) were over-ruled by knowing how much it was in her power to injure them in any future establishment, had they obliged her, and by her liberal promises of reward,

which, the house-keeper added, she had never kept. But this brief and uncircumstantial account was by no means satisfactory to me ; I called for materials for writing, and insisted she should, to the best of her recollection, relate every word or circumstance which had ever passed between her and the marchioness, and her other associate, relative to you. She hesitated at this. On those terms only, I said, I would grant her my forgiveness, and, by her complying with them, not only that, but a liberal recompense should be hers. This last promise had the desired effect ; she laid open indeed a scene of complicated iniquity ; related the manner in which colonel Belgrave was brought into the house by her and Mrs. Jane, how they had stationed themselves in a place of concealment, to listen, by which means they knew what passed between you, which she now, in almost the very same words you made use of, repeated to me. As she spoke I wrote it, and made her sign the paper, under a paragraph purporting that it was a true confession of the part she had taken, and knew others to have taken, in attempting to injure miss Fitzalan.

“ I now mentioned Mrs. Jane, whose evidence I wished for to corroborate hers. This she assured me I might procure by promising a reward, as Mrs. Jane was much dissatisfied with the marchioness and lady Euphrasia, neither of whom had recompensed her, as she expected, for her faithful services to them. She was now at the villa ; but the house-keeper added, that she would strike out some expedient to bring her to town in the course of the week, and would inform me immediately of her arrival. I told her the affair of the note should be no more mentioned, and gave a bill for fifty pounds, as the reward I had promised, and she eagerly expected. I told her she might promise a similar one, in my name, to Mrs. Jane, provided she also told truth. I also told her I would take care she should suffer no distress by quitting the marquis's family, which she lamented would be the consequence of what she had done.

“Mrs. Jane did not come to town as soon as I expected; but, on receiving a summons to inform me of her arrival, I hastened to the house, like an inquisitor-general, with my scroll, prepared to take the confession of the fair culprit, which exactly corresponded with the house-keeper’s, and I had the felicity of seeing her subscribe her name to it. I gave her the promised recompense most cheerfully, as I had not half so much trouble in making her tell truth, as I had with the house-keeper. Mrs. Jennings, your old landlady, and lady Greystock’s faithful friend, was the next and last person whose malice I wanted to refute. I made my servant enquire her character in the neighbourhood, and learned it was considered a very suspicious one. I went to her one morning in my carriage, well knowing that the appearance of rank and splendour would have a greater weight in influencing a being like her to justice, than any plea of conscience. She appeared lost in astonishment and confusion at my visit, and, I saw, waited with trembling expectation to have the reason of it revealed. I kept her not long in suspense. I was the friend, I told her, of a young lady whose character she had vilely and falsely aspersed. Her conscience, I told her, I believed would whisper to her heart the name of this lady, and send its crimson current to her face at the mention of miss Fitzalan.

“The wretch seemed ready to sink to the earth. I repeated to her all she had said concerning you to lady Greystock. I told her of the consequences of defamation, and declared she might expect the utmost rigour of the law, except she confessed her assertions were infamous falsehoods, and the motives which instigated her to them. She trembled with terror, and supplicated mercy: I desired her to deserve it by her confession. She then acknowledged she had grossly and cruelly wronged you by what she had said to lady Greystock, and that she had many opportunities of being convinced, while you resided in her house, that your virtue and innocence were of the purest nature; but that she was provoked to speak maliciously against you from resentment at losing all the rich

gifts colonel Belgrave had promised her, if she brought you to comply with his wishes. She related all the stratagems they had mutually concerted for your destruction, and she brought me some letters, which I have kept, from him to you, and which she pretended you had received, lest she should lose the money he always gave when she was successful in delivering one.

“ I bid her beware how she ever attempted to vilify innocence, lest the friends of those at whom she levelled the arrows of defamation should not be as merciful to her as miss Fitzalan’s had been; and, was the tale of the slanderer thus ever to be minutely investigated, the evil might die away by degrees, and many hapless victims escape who are daily sacrificed to malice, revenge, or envy.

“ Oh! my Amanda, I cannot express the transports I felt when I found the difficulties, which I dreaded as intervening between me and happiness, thus removed. I felt myself the happiest of men; my heart acknowledged your worth, I was convinced of your love, and in my hands I held the refutation of falsehood, and the confirmation of your innocence.

“ The period for mentioning my project was now arrived: I desired, the morning after my visit to Mrs. Jennings, to be indulged in a tête-à-tête in lady Martha’s dressing-room: I believe she half guessed what the subject would be; she saw by my countenance there was joyful news at hand. I shall not recapitulate our conversation; suffice it to say, that her excellent, feeling heart participated largely in my satisfaction; it did more than participate, it wished to increase it, where I could mention my project, she declared my Amanda should henceforth be considered as her adopted daughter, and should from her receive such a fortune as such a title claimed. Yes, my Amanda, the fortune she ever destined for me she said she should now consecrate to the purpose of procuring me a treasure the most valuable Heaven could bestow—the richest, the most valuable, indeed—a treasure dearer, far dearer to my soul for all the dangers it has encountered. I fell at lady Martha’s feet, in a transport of

gratitude, and acknowledged that she had anticipated what I was going to say, as I had been determined to throw myself on her generosity from the time I was convinced of your inflexible resolution not to unite yourself to me, without you brought a fortune.

“It was now agreed we should keep lord Cherbury a little longer ignorant of our intentions. We proposed taking the marchioness and lady Euphrasia by surprize, and hoped, by so doing, to be able to remove from his eyes the mist which partiality had hitherto spread before them, to obscure the defects of the above-mentioned ladies.

“He had hinted more than once his wishes for my paying my compliments to the marquis’s villa. I now proposed going thither myself the ensuing day. He looked equally surprized and pleased. At his proposal lady Martha agreed to accompany me, and his lordship, you may be sure, determined to be one of the party, that he might supply the deficiencies of his son, which he had heretofore found pretty manifest in such society.

“We had the happiness to find all the family at home when we reached the villa. The ladies all expressed themselves delighted at my unexpected appearance, and quite charmed by my recovered looks. The marquis, with his usual sang froid, declared himself glad to see me. Ye smiling deceivers! I cried to myself, as I surveyed the marchioness and lady Euphrasia, your triumph over innocence and beauty will soon be over. After passing half an hour in uninteresting chit-chat, I took the opportunity of one of those pauses in conversation which so frequently happen, to commence my attack: it would be as painful to you as me, to recapitulate all which ensued it consequence of it. Rage, guilt, and confusion were conspicuous in the marchioness and lady Euphrasia; the marquis and lady Greystock looked with astonishment, and my father seemed overwhelmed with surprise and consternation.

“I said, addressing the marchioness, I now trusted the resentment her ladyship entertained against her unof-

fending niece was sufficiently appeased by what she had made her suffer, and that she would rather rejoice than regret the opportunity which presented itself of vindicating her fame. I wished, I said, as much as possible, to spare her ladyship's feelings, and, provided she would clear miss Fitzalan from the obloquy which the transactions in her house cast upon her, I was willing to conceal the share her ladyship had in them. In a voice of smothered rage, and with a look into which she threw as much contempt as possible, she replied, "She thanked me for the attention I professed myself inclined to pay her feelings, but she fancied I had overlooked all inclination of this kind, when I undertook to bribe her servants to asperse her character, that miss Fitzalan's might be cleared. She was sorry, she said, to find I could be capable of such complicated baseness and weakness. Miss Fitzalan, she perceived, had made me her dupe again; but this was not surprising, as she was the professed pupil of art: too late I should behold her in her native colours, and find the disgrace, which, by artifice, I now attempted to remove from her character, thrown back upon her, perhaps to overwhelm me also by its weight."—"She has infatuated him," said lord Cherbury; "she will be the bane of his life, the destruction of my hopes."

"Not miss Fitzalan," cried I, assuming as much coolness as possible, though, like the marchioness, I found it a difficult task, "not miss Fitzalan, but the enemies of miss Fitzalan deceived me. I own I was the dupe of the scheme contrived against her; any thing so horrid, so monstrous, so execrable, I did not think could have entered into the minds of those who were bound by the united ties of kindred, and hospitality to protect her, and I rather believed I owed my misery to the frailty than the turpitude of human nature.

"You see, my lord," exclaimed the marchioness, turning to lord Cherbury, "lord Mortimer acknowledges his passion for this wretched girl."

"I do," cried I, "I glory in confessing it. In loving miss Fitzalan, I loved virtue itself; in acknowledg-

ing a passion for her, I violate no faith, I break no engagement; my heart ever resisted entering into any which it could not fulfil."

"Unfortunate proposition (said Lord Cherbury, sternly): but why, why, when you believed her guilty, were you so infatuated as to follow her to Ireland? Why not calmly resign her to the infamy she merited?"

"I followed her, my lord (I replied), in hope to withdraw her from her seducer's arms, and place her in her father's. I hoped, I trusted, I should be able also to alleviate the bitter destiny of poor Fitzalan: alas! not in the arms of a gay, successful seducer, but apparently in the arms of death, did I find Amanda. I saw her at the solemn hour which consigned her parent to his grave, and to have doubted her protestations of innocence then would have been almost impious. Gracious Heaven! how impossible to disbelieve her truth at the very moment her gentle spirit seemed about to take its flight to heaven! From that period she has stood acquitted in my mind, and from that period I determined to devote, to the utmost of my power, the machinations which had made me doubt her innocence. My success in their developement has been beyond my expectations; but Providence is on the side of suffering virtue, and assists those who stand up in its support."

"Contrary to my first intention, my dear Amanda, I have given you a sketch of part of our conversation. For the remainder it shall suffice to say, that the marchioness persevered in declaring I had bribed her servant to blacken her character, in order to clear miss Fitzalan: an attempt which she repeatedly assured me I would find unsuccessful.

"The marquis talked in high terms of the dignity of his house, and how impossible it was the marchioness should ever have disgraced it by such actions as I accused her of committing. I answered him, in a manner equally warm, that my accusations were too well grounded and supported to dread refutation; that it was not only due to injured innocence, but essential to my own honour,

which would soon be materially concerned in whatever related to miss Fitzalan, to have those accusations made public, if her ladyship refused to contradict the aspersions which might be thrown upon miss Fitzalan, in consequence of the scene which passed at his lordship's house.

"This the marchioness, with mingled rage and contempt, refused doing; and lady Euphrasia, after the hint I gave of soon being united to you, left the room in convulsive agitation.

"Lord Cherbury, I perceived, suspected foul play, by some speeches which dropped from him; such as, if there had been any misunderstanding between her ladyship and miss Fitzalan, it was better surely to have it done away; or certainly, if any mistake was proved relative to the affair which happened in her ladyship's house, it was but justice to the young lady to have it cleared up.

"Yet, notwithstanding the interest he felt in the cause of suffering innocence, it was obvious to me that he dreaded a rupture with the marquis's family, and appeared shocked at the unequivocal declaration I had made of never being allied to it.

"Lady Martha Dormer took up the cause. The testimony lord Mortimer had received, she said, of miss Fitzalan's innocence was incontrovertible, and exempted him alike from being stigmatized either as the dupe of art or love; humanity, she was convinced, exclusive of every warmer feeling, would have influenced him to have undertaken miss Fitzalan's cause; it was the cause of innocence and virtue, a cause in which every detester of scandal and treachery should join, since not only the defenceless orphan, but the protected child of rank and prosperity were vulnerable to their shafts.

"I again repeated the evidence of her servants, and the refutation of Mrs. Jennings to her former story; I produced, to strengthen it, the unopened letters of colonel Belgrave—thus continuing to put proof upon proof of your innocence (as Sancho Panza says) upon the shoulders of demonstration.

"The passions of the marchioness rose at last to frantic violence. She persisted in alleging her integrity and vilifying yours; but with a countenance so legibly impressed with guilt and confusion, that a doubt of her falsehood could not be entertained, even by those who wished to doubt it.

"The scene of violence we now became witness to was painful to me, and shocking to lady Martha; I therefore ordered the horses immediately to her ladyship's chariot, in which, accompanied by me, she had preceded lord Cherbury's coach, from the idea that our continuance at the villa might not be quite so long as his lordship's.

"As we expected, his lordship staid behind, with the hope, I perceived, of being able to calm the perturbations of the marchioness, and lessen the breach between us. He returned the next day to town. I have so long dwelt upon disagreeable scenes, that to go over any others would be dreadful; nor should I hint to you that I had such scenes to encounter, was it not to excuse and account to you for my absence from Castle Carberry: our difficulties (you see I already unite your interest with mine) began to decrease, and are at last happily overcome. Lady Martha made me write her intentions relative to you, and his lordship was quite satisfied with them. He authorizes me to assure you he longs to receive you into his family; at once a boast and acquisition to it, and he says, he shall consider himself under obligations to you, if you hasten, as much as possible, the period of becoming one of its members, thus giving him an opportunity of making early amends, by attention to the daughter, for the injustice he did the father.

"Lady Martha Dormer's intentions I have only hinted to you; in the letter, which I have the pleasure of enclosing, she is more explicit concerning them. I have given you this long narrative on paper, that, when we meet, our conversation may be unembittered by any painful retrospect, and that we may enjoy uninterrupted the bright prospect which now lies before us.

"But, ere I close my letter, I must inform you that, knowing you could never be selfishly wrapped up in your own enjoyments, I made every possible inquiry relative to your brother, and was at length referred by the agent of his late regiment to an officer in it: with some difficulty I found he had quitted his quarters on leave of absence. I wrote immediately to his family residence, and, after waiting long and impatiently for an answer to my letter, I dispatched a special messenger to learn whether he was there or not. The courier returned with a polite note from the officer's father, informing me his son was gone on an excursion of pleasure with some friends, and that if he knew where to find him, he would have transmitted my letter, which I might depend on being answered the moment he returned.

"I have no doubt but we shall receive intelligence from him concerning Mr. Fitzalan; it shall then be our business, if his situation is not already pleasing, to change it, or render it as much so as possible to him.

"Keep up your spirits therefore about him, for by the time we arrive in England I expect a letter from his friend, and let me not be any more pained by seeing your countenance clouded with care or anxiety.

"As a reward for reining in my impatience to see you this evening, be propitious to my request for early admission to-morrow; if charitable, you will allow me to breakfast with you: for I shall take none except with you, and, without an express command to the contrary, shall take it for granted I am expected.

"'Tis said that contrast heightens pleasure, and I believe the saying. I believe that without having felt pain in all its acuteness as I have done, I never should have felt such pleasure as I now enjoy. After so often giving you up, so often lamenting you as lost for ever, to think I shall soon call you mine is a source of transport which words cannot express. Mine, I may say, is the resurrection of happiness, for has it not been revived from the very grave of despair? But I forget that you have lady Martha Dormer's letter still to peruse. I acknowledge, that, for old

friendship's sake. I supposed you would give mine the preference; but in all reason it is time I should resign my place to her ladyship. But, ere I bid you adieu, I must tell you that Araminta is a sincere participator in our happiness; she arrived from Wales but a few minutes previous to my leaving London, and I would not allow her time, as she wished, to write to you. I almost forgot to tell you, that the marquis's family, amongst whom lady Greystock is still numbered, instead of returning to town, set out for Brighthelmstone: I have learned, contrary to my and their expectations, that neither the housekeeper nor Mrs. Jane have been dismissed, but both sent to a distant seat of the marquis's. As we know the marchioness's revengeful disposition, it is plain she has some secret motive for not gratifying it immediately by their dismissal; but what it is can be of little consequence for us to learn, since we are both too well guarded to suffer from any future plot of her's; like every other which was formed against my dear Amanda, I trust they will ever prove abortive. I was disturbed, within a few miles of Castle Carberry, by a gentleman passing on horseback, who either strongly resembled or was colonel Belgrave. My blood boiled in my veins at his sight; I left the carriage, mounted one of my servant's horses, and endeavoured to overtake him. He certainly avoided me by taking some cross-road, as his speed could not have out-stripped mine; my efforts to discover his habitation were equally unsuccessful. As to your personal security I had no apprehensions, having heard constantly from my good friend the doctor about you; but I dreaded the wretch, if it were really him, might disturb your tranquillity, either by forcing into your presence or writing; thank Heaven, from all intrusions or dangers of this kind, my Amanda will now be guarded: but again am I trespassing on the time you should devote to lady Martha's letter. Adieu, and do not disappoint my hopes of being allowed to visit you early.

"MORTIMER."

F 2

Amanda perused this letter with emotions which can be better conceived than described. She could scarcely have parted with it without a second reading, had not lady Martha's demanded her attention; she snatched it hastily from the ground where it hitherto lay neglected, and read to the following purpose:

"That I warmly and sincerely congratulate my dear and amiable miss Fitzalan on the happy revolution in her affairs, she will readily believe, persuaded as she must be of the deep interest I take in whatever concerns a person on whom the happiness of him whom I have loved from childhood so materially, so entirely, I may say, depends.

"Yet do not suppose me, my dear miss Fitzalan, so selfish, as not to be able to rejoice at your happiness on your own account, exclusive of every consideration relative to lord Mortimer: long since I was taught by description to esteem and admire you, and, even when the hope of being connected with you became extinct, I could not so totally forego that admiration as to feel uninterested about you. Oh! how truly do I rejoice at the revival of the hope I have just mentioned, and at its revival with every prospect of its being speedily realized! I shall consider lord Mortimer as one of the most fortunate of men in calling you his, and to think I have been able to promote his happiness gives me a satisfaction which never was, nor ever will be equalled by any circumstance in my life.

"Though I cannot give my adopted daughter a fortune by any means equal to that which lady Euphrasia Southerland will possess, lord Cherbury is fully sensible that her perfections will abundantly make up for any deficiency in this respect. Ten thousand pounds, and one thousand a-year, is at present to be her portion, and the reversion of the remainder of my fortune is to be secured to her and lord Mortimer; the final adjustment of all affairs is to take place at my house in the country, whither I propose going immediately, accompanied by lady Araminta, and where we shall both most impa-

tiently expect your arrival, which we mutually entreat may be hastened as much as possible, consistent with your health and convenience : lord Cherbury has promised to follow us in a few days, so that I suppose he will also be at Thornbury to receive you. Would to Heaven, my dear miss Fitzalan, injured virtue and innocence may always meet with such champions to vindicate them as lord Mortimer ! was that the case, we should see many lovely victims of scorn and reproach raising their heads with triumph and satisfaction. But pardon my involuntarily adverting to past scenes, though at the same time I think you have reason to rejoice at your trials, which served as so many tests and proofs of the estimable qualities you possess. Farewell, my dear miss Fitzalan ; I have been brief in my letter, because I know I should not be pardoned by a certain person if I engrossed too much of your time. I told him I would give you a hint of the impetuosity of his disposition ; but he told me, perhaps to prevent this, that you were already acquainted with it. In one instance I shall commend him for displaying it, that is, in hastening you to Thornbury, to the arms of your affectionate friend,

“ MARTHA DORMER.”

Amanda's happiness was now almost as great as it could be in this world ; almost I say, for it received alloy from the melancholy consideration that her father, that faithful and affectionate friend who had shared her troubles, could not be a partaker of her joys ; but the sigh of unavailing regret which rose in her mind she checked, by reflecting, that happiness all-perfect was more than humanity could either support or expect, and with pious gratitude she bent to the Power who had changed the discoloured prospect, by which she had been so long surrounded, into one of cheerfulness and beauty.

If her pride was wounded by the hint, though so delicately conveyed, which lord Mortimer had given of the difficulties he encountered in gaining lord Cherbury's approbation it was instantly relieved by the flattering commendations of lady Martha Dormer, and to be con-

nected with her and lady Araminta, she looked upon amongst the most valuable blessings she could enjoy.

To express what she felt for lord Mortimer would be impossible; language could not do justice to her feelings: she felt love, gratitude, and admiration for him, all in the fullest extent, and all united, and she wept in the fulness of her heart over the joyful assurance of being his. With the two letters in her hand she repaired to the prioress's apartment, whom she found alone. The good old lady saw the traces of tears on Amanda's face, and exclaimed, in a voice which evinced her sympathy in her concerns, "Oh! I fear, my child, something has happened to disturb you!" Amanda presented her the letters, and bid her judge from them whether she had not reason to be agitated. As the prioress read, her sudden and broken exclamations manifested her surprise and pleasure, and frequently were her spectacles removed to wipe from off them the tears of joy by which they were bedewed. When she finished the welcome packet, she turned to Amanda, who had been attentively watching the various turns in her countenance, and gave her a congratulatory embrace. "Lord Mortimer is worthy of you, my child," said the prioress, "and that is the highest eulogium I can pass on him." After commenting upon different parts of the letter, she asked Amanda, a little archly, "whether she intended sending an express command to his lordship against coming early in the morning?" Amanda honestly confessed she had no such intention, and expressed her wish to behold him. The prioress said she would have breakfast prepared for them in the garden parlour, and that she would take care they should not be interrupted. She also promised to keep every thing secret, till matters were arranged for Amanda's removal from St. Catharine's.

CHAP. VII.

Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
 And every care resign ;
 And shall we never—never part,
 Oh ! thou my all that's mine.

GOLDSMITH.

Joy is as great an enemy to repose as anxiety. Amanda passed an almost sleepless night, but her thoughts were too agreeably employed to allow her to suffer for want of rest ; early as she rose in the morning, she was but a short time in the parlour before lord Mortimer arrived. He appeared with all the transports of his soul beaming from his eyes, and was received by Amanda with tender and trembling emotion. He caught her to his heart as a treasure restored to him by the immediate hand of Heaven. He pressed her to it with silent ecstasy. Both for a few moments were unable to speak ; but the tears which burst from Amanda, and those that stopped on the glowing cheeks of lord Mortimer, expressed their feelings more forcibly than any language could have done.

Amanda at length found utterance, and began to thank his lordship for all the difficulties he had gone through in vindicating her fame. He hastily stopped those effusions of gratitude, by bidding her ask her heart whether he had not been serving himself as well as her by what he had done.

From the soft confusion into which his transports threw her, Amanda endeavoured to recover herself by repairing to the breakfast table, on which the good sisters had spread all the niceties (adapted for a morning repast) which the convent could produce ; but her hand was unsteady, she spilt the tea in pouring it out, and committed twenty blunders in helping lord Mortimer.

He laughed a little archly at her embarrassment, and insisted on doing the honours of the table himself, to which Amanda, with a deep blush, consented; but breakfast was little attended to. Amanda's hand was detained in lord Mortimer's, while his eyes were continually turning towards her, as if to assure his heart that in the lovely evidence of his happiness there was no deception; and the tenderness Amanda had no longer reason to restrain beamed from her looks, which also evinced her perfect sensibility of her present felicity—a felicity heightened by her approving conscience testifying she had merited it. The pure, the delightful satisfaction resulting from this reflection gave such radiance to her complexion, that lord Mortimer repeatedly declared her residence at St. Catharine's had made her more beautiful than ever. Twelve o'clock struck, and found them still loitering over the breakfast table. "The nuns will think we have made a tolerable feast," cried lord Mortimer, smiling, while Amanda arose with precipitation. "I need not," continued he, following her, "like Sterne, ask nature what has made the meal so delicious: I need only ask my own heart, and it will inform me, love and tenderness." Amanda blushed, and they went together into the garden. She would have walked before the windows of the convent, but lord Mortimer forced her gently into a dark, sequestered alley. Here their conversation became more connected than it had hitherto been; the generous intentions of lady Martha Dormer, and the arrangements she had made for the reception and nuptials of Amanda, were talked over; the marriage was to take place at Thornbury, lady Martha's seat; they were to continue there for a month after its solemnization, and from thence to go to an estate of lord Cherbury's for the remainder of the summer; a house in one of the squares was to be taken and prepared for their residence in winter, and lady Martha Dormer had promised, whenever she came to town, which was but seldom, she would make their house her home, provided they would promise to spend every Christmas, and three months at least in summer, with

her at Thornbury ; lord Mortimer said he had his choice of any of the earl's seats, but chose none, from an idea of the Hall being more agreeable to Amanda. She assured him it was, and he proceeded to mention the presents which lady Martha had prepared for her; also the carriages and retinue he had provided, and expected to find at Thornbury against she reached it, still asking if the arrangements he had made met her approbation.

Amanda was affected even to tears, by the solicitude he showed to please her, and he, perceiving her emotions, changed the discourse to talk about her removal from St. Catharine's ; he entreated her not to delay it longer than was absolutely necessary to adjust matters for it. She promised compliance to this entreaty, acknowledging that she but obeyed her inclinations in doing so, as she longed to be presented to her generous patroness, lady Martha, and to her amiable and beloved lady Araminta.

Lord Mortimer, delicately considerate about all which concerned her, begged she would speak to the prioress to procure a decent female, who should be a proper attendant for her journey ; they should travel together in one chaise, and he would follow them in another. Amanda promised she would lose no time in making this request, which, she had no doubt, would be successful.

Lord Mortimer presented her with a very beautiful embroidered purse, containing notes to the amount of five hundred pounds. Amanda blushed deeply, and felt her feelings a little hurt at the idea of being obliged to lord Mortimer for every thing. He pressed her hand, and, in a voice of soothing tenderness, told her he should be offended if she did not from this moment consider her interest inseparable from his. The notes, he said, of right belonged to her, as they amounted to but the individual sum he had already devoted to her use. He requested she would not curb in the least her generous spirit, but fulfil in the utmost extent all the claims which gratitude had upon her. The benevolent sisters of St. Catharine's were the foremost in the list of those who

had conferred obligations upon her, and he desired she would not only reward them liberally at present, but promise them an annual stipend of fifty pounds.

Amanda was truly delighted at this; to be able to contribute to the comfort of those who had so largely promoted her's was a source of exquisite felicity. Lord Mortimer presented her with his picture, which he had drawn in London for that purpose; it was a striking likeness, and most elegantly set with brilliants, which formed a cypher upon a plait of hair at the back. This was indeed a precious present to Amanda, and she acknowledged it was such. Lord Mortimer said, that in return for it he should expect her's at some future time; but added, smiling, "I shall not heed the shadow till I procure the substance." He also gave her a very beautiful ring, with an emblematical device, and adorned in the same manner as his picture, which lady Martha had sent as a pledge of future friendship; and he now informed her, that her ladyship, accompanied by lady Araminta, intended meeting them at Holyhead, that all due honour and attention might be paid to her adopted daughter.

In the midst of their conversation, the dinner bell rang from the convent. Amanda started, and declared she had not supposed it half so late.—The arch smile which this speech occasioned in lord Mortimer instantly made her perceive it had been a tacit confession of the pleasure she enjoyed in their tête-à-tête.

She blushed, and telling him she could not stay another moment, was hurrying away. He hastily caught her, and holding both her hands, declared she should not depart, neither would he to his solitary dinner, till she promised he might return to her early in the evening. To this she consented, provided he allowed her to have the prioress and sister Mary at least at tea. This was a condition lord Mortimer by no means liked to agree to, and he endeavoured to prevail on her to drop it; but, finding her inflexible, he said she was a provoking girl, and asked her if she was not afraid that, when he had the power, he would retaliate upon her for all

the trials she had put his patience to; but since she would have it so, why it must be so to be sure, he said; but he hoped the good ladies would have too much conscience to sit out the whole evening with them. That was all chance, Amanda said. The bell again rang, and he was forced to depart.

She took the opportunity of being alone with the prioress for a few minutes, to speak to her about procuring a female to attend her in her journey. The prioress said, she doubted not but she could procure her an eligible person from the neighbouring town, and promised to write there that very evening, to a family who would be able to assist her enquiries.

Both she and sister Mary were much pleased by being invited to drink tea with lord Mortimer. He came even earlier than was expected. Poor Amanda was terrified, lest her companions should over-hear him repeatedly asking her whether they would not retire immediately after tea? Though not over-heard, the prioress had too much sagacity not to know her departure was desired; she therefore, under pretence of business, retired, and took Mary along with her. Amanda and lord Mortimer went into the garden. He thanked her for not losing time in speaking to the prioress about her servant, and said that he hoped, at the end of the week, at farthest, she would be able to begin her journey. Amanda readily promised to use all possible dispatch. They passed some delightful hours in rambling about the garden, and talking over their felicity.

The prioress's expectation was answered relative to a servant; in the course of two days she produced one in every respect agreeable to Amanda, and things were now in such forwardness for her departure, that she expected it would take place as soon as lord Mortimer had mentioned. His time was passed almost continually at St. Catharine's, never leaving it except at dinner time, when he went to Castle Carberry: his residence there was soon known, and visitors and invitations without number came to the castle, but he found means of avoiding them.

Amanda, laughing, would often tell him he retarded the preparations for her journey by being always with her; this, he said, was only a pretext to drive him away, for that he rather forwarded them by letting her lose no time.

Lord Mortimer, on coming to Amanda one evening as usual, appeared uncommonly discomposed; his face was flushed, and his whole manner betrayed agitation. He scarcely noticed Amanda; but, seating himself, placed his arm upon a table, and leaned his head dejectedly upon it. Amanda was inexpressibly shocked, her heart panted with apprehension of ill, but she felt too timid to make an inquiry. He suddenly knit his brows, and muttered between his teeth, "curse on the wretch!"

Amanda could no longer keep silence: "What wretch?" she exclaimed, "or what is the meaning of this disorder?"

"First tell me, Amanda," said he, looking very steadfastly at her, "have you seen any stranger here lately?"

"Good heavens!" replied she, "what can you mean by such a question? but I solemnly assure you I have not."

"Enough," said he, "such an assurance restores me to quiet; but, my dear Amanda," coming over to her, and taking her hands in his, "since you have perceived my agitation, I must account to you for it. I have just seen Belgrave; he was but a few yards from me on the common when I saw him; but the mean, despicable wretch, loaded as he is with conscious guilt, durst not face me; he got out of my way by leaping over the hedge which divides the common from a lane with many intricate windings: I endeavoured, but without success, to discover the one he had retreated through."

"I see," said Amanda, pale and trembling, "he is destined to make me wretched. I had hoped indeed that lord Mortimer would no more have suffered his quiet to be interrupted by him; it implies such a doubt," said she, weeping, "as shocks my soul! If suspicion is thus continually to be revived, we had better separate at

THE ABBEY.

once, for misery must be the consequence of a union without mutual confidence."

"Gracious heaven!" said lord Mortimer, "how unfortunate I am to give you pain! You mistake entirely, indeed, my dearest Amanda, the cause of my uneasiness: I swear by all that is sacred, no doubt, no suspicion of your worth has arisen in my mind. No man can think more highly of a woman than I do of you; but I was disturbed lest the wretch should have forced himself into your presence, and lest you, through apprehensions for me, concealed it from me."

The explanation calmed the perturbation of Amanda: as an atonement for the uneasiness he had given her, she wanted lord Mortimer to promise he would not endeavour to discover Belgrave. This promise he avoided giving, and Amanda was afraid of pressing it, lest the spark of jealousy, which she was convinced existed in the disposition of lord Mortimer, should be blown into a flame. That Belgrave would studiously avoid him she trusted, and she resolved, that if the things that she had deemed it necessary to order from the neighbouring town were not finished, to wait no longer for them, as she longed now more than ever to quit a place she thought dangerous to lord Mortimer. The ensuing morning, instead of seeing his lordship at breakfast, a note was brought to her, couched in these words:

" TO MISS FITZALAN.

"I am unavoidably prevented from waiting on my dear Amanda this morning, but in the course of the day she may depend on either seeing or hearing from me again. She can have no excuse now on my account about not hastening the preparations for her journey, and, when we meet, if I find her time has not been employed to this purpose, she may expect a severe chiding from her faithful

" MORTIMER."

This note filled Amanda with the most alarming disquiet. It was evident to her that he was gone in pursuit

of Belgrave. She ran into the hall to inquire of the messenger about his master, but he was gone. She then hastened to the prioress, and communicated her apprehensions to her. The prioress endeavoured to calm them, by assuring her she might be convinced that Belgrave had taken too many precautions to be discovered.

Amanda's breakfast, however, remained untouched, and her things unpacked, and she continued the whole morning the picture of anxiety, impatiently expecting the promised visit or letter; neither came, and she resolved to send, after dinner, the old gardener to Castle Carberry to inquire after lord Mortimer. While she was speaking to him for that purpose, the maid followed her into the garden, and told her there was a messenger in the parlour from lord Mortimer. She flew thither; but what words can express her surprise, when the supposed messenger, raising a large hat which shadowed his face, and removing a handkerchief which he had hitherto held up to it, discovered to her view the features of lord Cherbury! She could only exclaim, "Gracious Heaven, has any thing happened to lord Mortimer?" ere she sunk into a chair in breathless agitation.

CHAP. VIII.

My heavy heart,
The prophetess of woe, foretels some ill
At hand.

LORD Cherbury hastened to support and calm her agitation, by assuring her lord Mortimer was in perfect safety. Recovering a little by this assertion, she asked him how he was assured of this. He answered, because he had seen him, though without being per-

ceived by him, about an hour ago. Amanda, restored to her faculties by being assured he was uninjured, began to reflect on the suddenness of lord Cherbury's visit. She would have flattered herself he came to introduce her to his family himself, had not his looks almost forbid such an idea: they were gloomy and disordered; his eyes were fastened on her, yet he appeared unwilling to speak.

Amanda felt herself in too awkward and embarrassing a situation to break the unpleasant silence. At last lord Cherbury suddenly exclaimed: "Lord Mortimer does not, nor must not, know of my being here."

"Must not!" repeated Amanda, in inconceivable astonishment.

"Gracious 'Heaven!'" said lord Cherbury, starting from the chair on which he had thrown himself, opposite to her, "how shall I begin, how shall I tell her? Oh! miss Fitzalan," he continued, approaching her, "I have much to say, and you have much to hear, which will shock you; I believed I could better in an interview have informed you of particulars, but I find I was mistaken. I will write to you."

"My lord," cried Amanda, rising, all pale and trembling, "tell me now; to leave me in suspense, after receiving such dreadful hints, would be cruelty. Oh! surely, if lord Mortimer be safe; if lady Martha Dormer, if lady Araminta is well, I can have nothing so very shocking to hear."

"Alas!" replied he, mournfully shaking his head, "you are mistaken. Be satisfied, however, that the friends you have mentioned are all well. I have said I would write to you. Can you meet me this evening amongst the ruins?" Amanda gave an assenting bow. "I shall then," pursued he, "have a letter ready to deliver you. In the mean time I must inform you, no person in the world knows of my visit here but yourself, and, of all beings, lord Mortimer is the last I should wish to know it. Remember then, miss Fitzalan," taking her hand, which he grasped with violence, as if to

impress his words upon her heart, "remember, that on your secrecy every thing most estimable in life, even life itself, perhaps depends."

With these dreadful and mysterious words he departed, leaving Amanda a picture of horror and surprise; it was many minutes ere she moved from the attitude in which he left her, and when she did, it was only to walk in a disordered manner about the room, repeating his dreadful words. He was come perhaps to part her and lord Mortimer; and yet, after consenting to their union, surely lord Cherbury could not be guilty of such treachery and deceit. Yet, if this was not the case, why conceal his coming to Ireland from lord Mortimer? Why let it be known only to her? And what could be the secrets of dreadful import he had to communicate?

From these self-interrogations, in which her reason was almost bewildered, the entrance of the prioress drew her.

She started at seeing the pale and distracted looks of Amanda, and asked, "if she had heard any bad tidings of lord Mortimer?"

Amanda sighed heavily at this question, and said, "No." The secrecy she had been enjoined she durst not violate, by mentioning the mysterious visit to her friend. Unable, however, to converse on any other subject, she resolved to retire to her chamber. She placed her illness and agitation to the account of lord Mortimer, and said a little rest was absolutely necessary for her, and begged, if his lordship came in the course of the evening, he might be told she was too ill to see him.

The prioress pressed her to stay for tea. She refused, and, as she retired from the room, desired nothing might be said of the person who had just seen her to lord Mortimer; saying, with a faint smile, "she would not make him vain by letting him know of her anxiety about him." She retired to her chamber, and endeavoured to controul her perturbations, that she might be the better

enabled to support what she had so much reason to apprehend. Neither the prioress nor the nuns, in obedience to her injunctions, intruded upon her, and, at the appointed hour, she softly opened the chamber door, and, every place being clear, stole softly from the convent.

She found lord Cherbury waiting for her amidst the solitary ruins. He had a letter in his hand, which he presented to her the moment she appeared.

"In this letter, miss Fitzalan," said he, "I have opened to you my whole heart: I have disburthened it of secrets which have long oppressed it; I have entrusted my honour to your care. From what I have said, that its contents are of a sacred nature, you may believe: should they be considered in any other light by you, the consequences may, nay must be fatal." He said this with a sternness which made Amanda shrink. "Meditate well on the contents of that letter, miss Fitzalan," continued he, with a voice of deep solemnity, "for it is a letter which will fix your destiny and mine; even should the request contained in it be refused, let me be the first acquainted with the refusal; then, indeed, I shall urge you no more to secrecy, for what will follow, in consequence of such a refusal, must divulge all."

"Oh! tell me, tell me," said Amanda, catching hold of his arm, "tell me what is the request, or what it is I am to fear: Oh! tell me at once, and rid me of the torturing suspense I endure."

"I cannot," he cried, "indeed I cannot. To-morrow night I shall expect your answer here at the same hour."

At this moment lord Mortimer's voice calling upon Amanda was heard. Lord Cherbury dropped her hand which he had taken, and instantly retired amongst the windings of the pile, from whence lord Mortimer soon appeared, giving Amanda only time to hide the fatal letter.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed he, "what could have brought you hither, and who was the person who just departed from you?" It was well for Amanda that the

twilight gave but an imperfect view of her face, she felt her colour come and go; a cold dew overspread her forehead; she leaned against a rude fragment of the building, and faintly exclaimed, "the person——"

"Yes," said lord Mortimer, "I am sure I heard retreating footsteps."

"You are mistaken," repeated Amanda in the same faint accent.

"Well," said he, "though you may dispute the evidence of my ears, you cannot the evidence of my eyes; I see you here, and am astonished at it."

"I came here for air," said Amanda.

"For air," repeated lord Mortimer, "I own I should have thought the garden better adapted for such a purpose; but why come hither in a clandestine manner? Why, if you have the fears you would persuade me you have, expose yourself to danger from the wretch who haunts the place, by coming here alone? When I went to the convent I was told you were indisposed, and could not be disturbed: I could not depart, however, without making an effort to see you; but you can easier imagine than I describe the consternation I felt when you could not be found. It was wrong; indeed, Amanda, it was wrong to come here alone, and affect concealment."

"Gracious Heaven!" said Amanda, raising her hands and eyes, and bursting into tears, "how wretched am I!"

She was, indeed, at this moment, superlatively wretched. Her heart was oppressed by the dread of evil, and she perceived suspicions in lord Mortimer which she could not attempt to remove, lest an intimation of the secret she was so awfully enjoined to keep should escape.

"Ah! Amanda," said lord Mortimer, losing in a moment the asperity with which he had addressed her at first; "ah! Amanda, like the rest of your sex, you know too well the power of your tears not to use them. Forget, or at least forgive, all I have said. I was disappointed in not seeing you the moment I expected, and that put me out of temper. I know I am too impetuous, but you will in time subdue every unruly passion; I

put myself into your hands, and you shall make me what you please:"

He now pressed her to his bosom, and finding her tremble universally, again implored her forgiveness, as he imputed the agitation she betrayed entirely to the uneasiness he had given her. She assured him, with a faltering voice, he had not offended her. Her spirits were affected, she said, by all she had suffered during the day: lord Mortimer placing, as she wished, those sufferings to his own account, declared her anxiety at once pained and pleased him, adding, he would truly confess what detained him from her during the day, as soon as they returned to the convent.

Their return to it relieved the sisterhood, who had also been seeking Amanda, from many apprehensions. The prioress and sister Mary followed them into the parlour, where lord Mortimer begged "they would have compassion on him, and give him something for his supper, as he had scarcely eaten any thing the whole day."

Sister Mary instantly replied, "He should be gratified, and, as Amanda was in the same predicament, she hoped he would now be able to prevail on her to eat." The cloth was accordingly laid, and a few trifles placed upon it. Sister Mary would gladly have staid, but the prioress had understanding enough to think the supper would be more palatable if they were absent, and accordingly retired.

Lord Mortimer now, with the most soothing tenderness, tried to cheer his fair companion, and make her take some refreshment; but his efforts for either of these purposes were unsuccessful; and she besought him not to think her obstinate, if she could not in a moment recover her spirits. To divert his attention a little from herself, she asked him to perform his promise, by relating what kept him the whole day from St. Catharine's.

He now acknowledged he had been in search of Belgrave; but the precautions he had taken to conceal himself baffled all inquiries; "which convinces me," continued lord Mortimer, "if I wanted conviction about

such a matter, that he has not yet dropped his villainous designs upon you. But the wretch cannot always escape the vengeance he merits."

"May he never," cried Amanda fervently, yet involuntarily, "meet it from your hands!"

"We will drop that part of the subject," said lord Mortimer, "if you please. You must know," continued he, "after scouring the whole neighbourhood, I fell in about four miles hence with a gentleman, who had visited at the marquis of Rosline's last summer. He immediately asked me to accompany him home to dinner. From his residence in the country, I thought it probable he might be able to give some account of Belgrave, and therefore accepted the invitation; but my inquiries were as fruitless here as elsewhere. When I found it so, I was on thorns to depart, particularly as all the gentlemen were set in for drinking, and I feared I might be thrown into an improper situation to visit my Amanda. I was on the watch, however; and, to use their sporting term, literally stole away."

"Thank Heaven!" said Amanda, "your inquiries proved fruitless. Oh! never, never repeat them; think no more about a wretch so despicable."

"Well," cried lord Mortimer, "why don't you hurry me from the neighbourhood? fix the day, the moment for our departure: I have been here already five days; lady Martha's patience is, I dare say, quite exhausted by this time, and, should we delay much longer, I suppose she will think we have both become converts to the holy rites of this convent, and that I, instead of taking the vows which should make me a joyful bride-groom, am about taking those which shall doom me to ~~ba~~baey; seriously, what but want of inclination can longer detain you?"

"Ah!" said Amanda, "you know too well that my departure cannot be retarded by want of inclination."

"Then why not decide immediately upon the day?" Amanda was silent; her situation was agonizing: how could she fix upon a day, uncertain whether she did not

possess a letter which would prevent her ever taking the projected journey?"

"Well," said lord Mortimer, after allowing her some time to speak, "I see I must fix the day myself: this is Tuesday—let it be Thursday."

"Let us drop the subject this night, my lord," said Amanda; "I am really ill, and only wait for your departure to retire to rest."

Lord Mortimer obeyed her, but with reluctance, and soon after retired.

CHAP. X.

As one condemn'd to leap a precipice,
Who sees before his eyes the depth below,
Stops short, and looks about for some kind shrub
To break his dreadful fall.

DRYDEN.

AMANDA went to her chamber the moment lord Mortimer departed; the nuns were already retired to rest, so that the stillness which reigned through the house added to the awfulness of her feelings, as she sat down to peruse a letter which she had been previously informed would fix her fate.

"TO MISS FITZALAN.

"To destroy a prospect of felicity, at the very moment its enveloping glooms are dispersed, is indeed the source of pangs most dreadful; yet such are the horrors of my destiny, that nothing but intermingling between you, Mortimer, and happiness, can save me from perdition! Appalled at this dreadful assertion, the letter drops from your trembling hands; but oh! dear miss Fitzalan, cast it not utterly aside till you peruse the rest of the contents, and fix the destiny of this most wretched

of mankind ; wretched in thinking he shall interrupt not only your peace, but the peace of a son, so noble, so gracious, so idolized as Mortimer is by him. But I will no longer torture your feelings by keeping you in suspense ; the preface I have already given is sufficient, and I will be explicit : gambling, that bane of fame and fortune, has been my ruin ; but whilst I indulged, so well did I conceal my propensity for it, that even those I called my friends are ignorant of it. With shame I confess I was ever foremost to rail against this vice, which was continually drawing sums in secret from me, that would have given comfort and affluence to many a child of want for some time ; my good and bad fortune were so equal, that my income suffered no considerable diminution. About five years ago, a Mr. Freelove, a particular friend of mine, died, and left to my care his only son, who, I dare say, you may recollect having seen at my house last winter : this young man's property was consigned to my care, to manage as much for his advantage as I could ; it consisted of a large estate and fifty thousand pounds. At the period Freelove became my ward, I had had a constant run of ill-luck for many months. The ardour of gaming (unlike every other passion) is rather increased than diminished by disappointment. Without being warned therefore by ill success, I still went on, till all I could touch of my own property was gone. Did I then retire, ashamed of my folly ? No ; I could not bear to do so, without another effort for recovering my losses, and in that effort risked something more precious than I had ever yet done, namely, my honour, by using the money which lay in my hands belonging to Freelove. The long period which was to elapse ere he came of age, emboldened me to this. Ere that period I trusted I should have retrieved my losses, and been enabled not only to discharge the principal, but whatever interest it would have brought, if applied to another purpose. I followed the bent of my evil genius, sum after sum taken up, and all alike buried in the accursed vortex which had already swallowed so

much from me ! But when I found all was gone, oh, miss Fitzalan ! I still tremble at the distraction of that moment.

“ All, as I have said before, that I could touch of property was gone ; the remainder was so settled I had no power over it, except joined by my son. Great as was the injury he would sustain by mortgaging it, I was confident he never would hesitate doing so if acquainted with my distress ; but to let him know it, was worse than a death of torture could be to me ; his early excellence, the nobleness of his principles, mingled in the love I felt for him a degree of awe ; to confess myself a villain to such a character, to acknowledge my life had been a scene of deceit ; to be abashed, confounded in the presence of my son, to meet his piercing eye, to see the blush of shame mantle his cheeks, for his father's crimes—oh horrible !—most horrible ! I raved at the idea, and resolved, if driven by necessity to tell him of my baseness, not to survive the confession. At this critical juncture, the marquis of Rosline came from Scotland, to reside in London ; an intimacy, which had been dormant for years, between our families, was then revived ; and I soon found that an alliance between them would be pleasing. The prospect of it raised me from the very depth of despair ; but my transports were of short continuance, for Mortimer not only showed, but expressed the strongest repugnance to such a connection.

“ Time and daily experience, I trusted, would so forcibly convince him of the advantages of it, as at last to conquer this repugnance ; nor did the hope of an alliance taking place entirely forsake my heart, till informed he was already bestowed upon another object. My feelings at this information I shall not attempt to describe ; all hope of saving myself from dishonour was now cut off ; for, though dutiful and attentive to me in the highest degree, I could not flatter myself that Mortimer would blindly sacrifice his reason and inclination to my will. The most fatal intentions again took possession of my

mind, but the uncertainties he suffered on your account kept me in horrible suspense as to their execution; after some months of torture, I began again to revive, by learning that you and Mortimer were inevitably separated; and such is the selfish nature of vice, so abandoned is it to all feelings of humanity, that I rather rejoiced at than lamented the supposed disgrace of the daughter of my friend.

“ But the persevering constancy of Mortimer, rather, let me say, the immediate interposition of Providence, soon gave her reason to triumph over the arts of her enemies, and I was again reduced to despair. Mortimer, I dare say, from motives of delicacy, has concealed from you the opposition I gave to his wishes, after your innocence was cleared, and the intentions of lady Martha Dormer, relative to you, were made known; at last I found I must either seem to acquiesce in these wishes and intentions, or divulge my real motive for opposing them; or else quarrel with my son and sister, and appear, in their eyes, the most selfish of human beings: I, therefore, to appearance, acquiesced, but resolved in reality to throw myself upon your mercy; believing, that a character so tender, so perfect, so heroic like, as your's has been, through every scene of distress, would have compassion on a fallen fellow-creature. Was my situation otherwise than it now is, were you even portionless, I should rejoice at having you united to my family, from your own intrinsic merit. Situated as I am, the fortune lady Martha Dormer proposes giving you can be of no consequence to me; the projected match between you and Mortimer is yet a secret from the public, of course it has not lessened his interest with the Rosline family. I have been already so fortunate as to adjust the unlucky difference which took place between them, and remove any resentment they entertained against him, and I am confident the first overture he should make for a union with lady Euphrasia would be successful. The fortune which would immediately be received with her, is sixty thousand pounds, and five thousand a-year; the first would be given up to me in place of the settlement I

should make on lord Mortimer, so that you see, my dear miss Fitzalan, his marriage with lady Euphrasia would at once extricate me from all my difficulties. Freëlove in a few months will be of age, and the smallest delay in settling with him, after he attains that period, must brand me with dishonour.

“ I stand upon the verge of a dreadful abyss, and it is in your power only to preserve me from plunging into it: you who, like an angel of mercy, may bid me live, and save me from destruction. Yet think not, in resigning lord Mortimer, if indeed such a resignation should take place, you sacrifice your own interest. No; it shall be my grateful care to secure to you independence; and I am confident, among the many men you must meet, sensible of your worth, and enraptured with your charms, you may yet select one, as calculated to render you happy as Mortimer, while he, disappointed of the object of his affections, will, I have no doubt, without longer hesitation, accept the one I shall again propose to him.

“ But should you determine on giving him up, you ask how, and by what means, you can break with him, after what has passed, without revealing your real motive for doing so to him.

“ That is indeed a difficulty; but, after going so far, I must not hesitate in telling you how it can be removed. You must retire secretly from his knowledge, and leave no clue behind, by which you can be traced. If you comply with the first of my requests, but stop short here, you will defeat all that your mercy, your pity, your compassion could do to save me; since the consequence of any hesitation must be a full explanation; and I have already said it, and now repeat it in the most solemn manner, that I will not survive the divulgement of my secret; for never, no, never will I live humbled in the eyes of my son: if then you comply, comply not in part. Pardon me, dear miss Fitzalan, if you think there is any thing arbitrary in my style; I would have softened, if I could, all I had to say; but the time, the danger, the necessity, urged me to be explicit. I have now, to you, as to a superior being, opened my whole

heart; it rests with you whether I shall live to atone for my follies, or by one desperate action terminate them. Should you show me mercy, unworthy as I am of it, should you, in compassion to poor Mortimer, comply with a request which can only save him from the pangs he would feel at a father's quitting life unbidden, my gratitude, my admiration, my protection, whilst I live, will be yours, and the first act of my restored life will be to secure you a competence. I shall wait with trembling anxiety for your appearance, to-morrow night; till then believe me

“Your sincere, though most unhappy friend,

“CHERBURY.”

The fatal letter fell from Amanda, a mist overspread her eyes, and she sunk senseless on her chair; but the privation of her misery was of short duration, and she recovered as if from a dreadful dream; she felt cold, trembling, and terrified; she looked round the room with an eye of apprehension and dismay, bewildered as to the cause of her wretchedness and terror, till the letter at her feet again struck her sight.

“Was there no way,” she asked herself, as she again examined the contents, “was there no way by which the dreadful sacrifice it doomed her to could be avoided? Lady Martha and lord Mortimer would unite their efforts to save the honour of their wretched relative; they would sooth his feelings—they would compassionate his failings—they would——” but she started in the midst of these ideas; started as from ideas fraught with guilt and horror, as those fatal words rushed upon her mind: “I will not survive the divulgement of my secret;” and she found that to save the father, she must resign the son.

How unworthy of such a sacrifice, engaged as she was to lord Mortimer! She began to doubt whether she had a right to make it. What a doubt! She shuddered for having conceived it, and reproached herself for yielding a moment to the suggestions of tenderness, which had

given rise to it. She resolved, without a farther struggle, to submit to reason and virtue, convinced that, if accessory to lord Cherbury's death, nothing could assuage her wretchedness, and the unhappiness lord Mortimer would suffer at losing her would be trifling, compared to that he would feel if he lost his father by an act of suicide.

"In my fate," exclaimed she, in a low and broken accent of despair, "there is no alternative! I submit to it without a farther struggle. I dare not call upon one being to advise me: I resign him, therefore," she continued, as if lord Cherbury was really present to hear her resignation, "resign lord Mortimer: but, oh, my God!" raising her hands with agony to heaven, "give me fortitude to bear the horrors of my situation. Oh, Mortimer, dear, invaluable Mortimer! the hand of fate is against our union, and we must part, never, never more to meet! From the imputation of ingratitude and ~~guilt~~ ^{guilt} I shall not be allowed to vindicate myself: no, I ~~am~~ ^{am} completely the victim of lord Cherbury—the cruel, perfidious Cherbury, whose treachery, whose seeming acquiescence in the wishes of his son has given me joy but to render my misery more acute!"

That lord Mortimer would impute withdrawing herself from him to an attachment for Belgrave, she was convinced; and that her fame, as well as peace, should be sacrificed to lord Cherbury, caused such a whirl of contending passions in her mind, that reason and reflection for a few minutes yielded to their violence, and she resolved to vindicate herself to lord Mortimer. This resolution, however, was of short continuance; as her subsiding passions again gave her power to reflect, she was convinced that by trying to clear herself of an imaginary crime she should commit a real one, since, to save her own character, lord Cherbury's must be stigmatized, and the consequence of such an act he had already declared, so that, not only by the world, but by her own conscience, she should for ever be accused of accelerating his death.

"It must, it must be made," she wildly cried, "the sacrifice must be made, and Mortimer is lost to me for ever." She flung herself on the bed, and passed the hours till morning in agonies too great for description. From a kind of stupefaction rather than sleep, into which she had gradually sunk towards morning, she was aroused by a gentle tap at the chamber door, and the voice of sister Mary, informing her that lord Mortimer was below and impatient for his breakfast.

Amanda started from the bed, and bid her tell his lordship she would attend him immediately. She then adjusted her dress, tried to calm her spirits, and, with uplifted hands and eyes, besought Heaven to support her through the trials of the day.

Weak and trembling she descended to the parlour. The moment she entered it, lord Mortimer, shocked, and surprised by her altered looks, exclaimed, "Gracious heaven! what is the matter?" Then feeling the feverish heat of her hands, continued, "Why, why, Amanda, had you the cruelty to conceal your illness? Proper assistance might have prevented its increasing to such a degree." With unutterable tenderness he folded his arms about her, and, while her drooping head sunk on his bosom, declared he would immediately send for the physician who had before attended her.

"Do not," said Amanda, while tears trickled down her cheeks. "Do not," continued she, in a broken voice, "for he could do me no good."

"No good," repeated lord Mortimer, in a terrified accent.

"I mean," cried she, recollecting herself, "he would find it unnecessary to prescribe any thing for me, as my illness only proceeds from the agitation I suffered yesterday; it made me pass an indifferent night, but quietness to-day will recover me."

Lord Mortimer was with difficulty persuaded to give up his intention, nor would he relinquish it till she had promised, if not better before the evening, to inform him, and let the physician be sent for.

They now sat down to breakfast, at which Amanda was unable either to preside or eat. When over, she told lord Mortimer she must retire to her chamber, as rest was essential for her; but between nine and ten in the evening she would be happy to see him. He tried to persuade her that she might rest as well upon the sofa in the parlour as in her chamber, and that he might then be allowed to sit with her: but she could not be persuaded to this, she said, and begged he would excuse seeing her till the time she had already mentioned.

He at last retired with great reluctance, but not till she had several times desired him to do so.

Amanda now repaired to her chamber, but not to indulge in the supineness of grief, though her heart felt bursting, but to settle upon some plan for her future conduct. In the first place she meant immediately to write to lord Cherbury, as the best method she could take of acquainting him with her compliance, and preventing any conversation between them, which would now have been insupportable to her.

In the next place she designed acquainting the prioress with the sudden alteration in her affairs, only concealing from her the occasion of that alteration, and, as but one day intervened between the present and the one fixed for her journey, meant to beseech her to think of some place to which she might retire from lord Mortimer.

Yet such was the opinion she knew the prioress entertained of lord Mortimer, that she almost dreaded she would impute her resignation of him to some criminal motive, and abandon her entirely. If this should be the case (and scarcely should she be surprized if it was), she resolved without delay to go privately to the neighbouring town, and from thence proceed immediately to Dublin: how she should act there, or what would become of her, never entered her thoughts; they were wholly engrossed about the manner in which she should leave St. Catharine's.

But she hoped, much as appearances were against her, she should not be deserted by the prioress. Providence,

she trusted, would be so compassionate to her misery, as to preserve her this one friend, who could not only assist but advise her.

As soon as she had settled the line of conduct she should pursue, she sat down to pen her renunciation of lord Mortimer, which she did in the following words:

“ TO THE EARL OF CHERBURY.

“ *My Lord,*

“ To your wishes I resign my happiness; my happiness, I repeat, for it is due to lord Mortimer to declare, that a union with such a character as his must have produced the highest felicity; it is also due to my own to declare, that it was neither his rank nor fortune, but his virtues, which influenced my inclination in his favour.

“ Happy had it been for us all, my lord, but particularly for me, had you continued steady in opposing the wishes of your son. My reverence for paternal authority is too great ever to have allowed me to act in opposition to it. I should not then, by your seeming acquiescence to them, have been tempted to think my trials all over.

“ But I will not do away any little merit your lordship may perhaps ascribe to my immediate compliance with your request, by dwelling upon the sufferings it entails on me. May the renunciation of my hopes be the means of realizing your lordship's, and may superior fortune bring superior happiness to lord Mortimer!

“ I thank your lordship for your intentions relative to me: but whilst I do so, must assure you, both now and for ever, I shall decline having them executed for me.

“ I shall not disguise the truth: it would not be in your lordship's power to recompense the sacrifice I have made you, and besides, pecuniary obligations can never sit easy upon a feeling mind, except they are conferred by those we know value us, and whom we value ourselves.

“ *I have the honour to be,*

“ *Your lordship's obedient servant,*

“ AMANDA FITZALAN.”

The tears she had with difficulty restrained while she was writing, now burst forth. She rose and walked to the window, to try if the air would remove the faintishness which oppressed her: from it she perceived lord Mortimer and the prioress in deep conversation, at a little distance from the convent; she conjectured she was their subject, for, as lord Mortimer retired; the prioress, whom she had not seen that day before, came into her chamber. After the usual salutations, "lord Mortimer has been telling me you were ill," said she: "I trusted a lover's fears had magnified the danger: but truly, my dear child, I am sorry to say this is not the case; tell me, my dear, what is the matter? Surely now, more than ever, you should be careful of your health."

"Oh! no," said Amanda with a convulsive throb—"oh! no," wringing her hands, "you are sadly mistaken." The prioress grew alarmed, her limbs began to tremble, she was unable to stand, and, dropping on the nearest chair, besought Amanda, in a voice expressive of her feelings, to explain the reason of her distress.

Amanda knelt before her; she took her hands, she pressed them to her burning forehead and lips, and bedewed them with her tears, whilst she exclaimed she was wretched.

"Wretched!" repeated the prioress; "for Heaven's sake be explicit; keep me no longer in suspense; you sicken my very heart by your agitation; it foretels something dreadful!"

"It does indeed," said Amanda; "it foretels that lord Mortimer and I will never be united!"

The prioress started, and surveyed Amanda with a look which seemed to say, "she believed she had lost her senses;" then, with assumed composure, begged "she would defer any farther explanation of her distress till her spirits were in a calmer state."

"I will not rise," cried Amanda, taking the prioress's hand, which, in her surprise, she had involuntarily withdrawn—"I will not rise till you say, that, notwithstanding

ing the mysterious situation in which I am involved, you will continue to be my friend. Oh! such an assurance would assuage the sorrows of my heart."

The prioress now perceived that it was grief alone which disordered Amanda; but how she had met with any cause for grief, or what could occasion it, were matters of astonishment to her. "Surely, my dear child," cried she, "should know me too well to desire such an assurance; but, however mysterious her situation may appear to others, she will not, I trust and believe, let it appear so to me. I wait with impatience for an explanation."

"It is one of my greatest sorrows," exclaimed Amanda, "that I cannot give such an explanation: no, no," she continued in an agony, "a death-bed confession would not authorize my telling you the occasion of lord Mortimer's separation and mine." The prioress now insisted on her taking a chair, and then begged, as far as she could, without farther delay, she would let her into her situation.

Amanda immediately complied. "An unexpected obstacle to her union with lord Mortimer," she said, "had arisen; an obstacle which, while compelled to submit to it, she was bound most solemnly to conceal; it was expedient, therefore, she should retire from lord Mortimer, without giving him the smallest intimation of such an intention, lest, if he suspected it, he should inquire too minutely, and, by so doing, plunge not only her but himself into irremediable distress. To avoid this, it was necessary all but the prioress should be ignorant of her scheme, and by her means she hoped she should be put in a way of finding such a place of secrecy and security as she required. She besought the prioress, with streaming eyes, not to impute her resignation of lord Mortimer to any unworthy motive; to that Heaven, which could alone console her for her loss, she appealed for her innocence: she besought her to believe her sincere, to pity, but not condemn her, to continue her friend now, when her friendship was most needful, in this her deep distress, and she assured her, if it was withdrawn, she

believed she could no longer struggle with her sorrows. The prioress remained silent a few minutes, and then addressed her in a solemn voice.

“ I own, miss Fitzalan, your conduct appears so inexplicable, so astonishing, that nothing but the opinion I have formed of your character, from seeing the manner in which you have acted, since left to yourself, could prevent my esteem from being diminished: but I am persuaded you cannot act from a bad motive; therefore, till that persuasion ceases, my esteem can know no diminution. From this declaration you may be convinced, that, to the utmost of my power, I will serve you; yet, ere you finally determine and require such service, weigh well what you are about; consider, in the eyes of the world, you are about acting a dishonourable part, in breaking your engagement with lord Mortimer, without assigning some reason for doing so. Nothing short of a point of conscience should influence you to this.”

“ Nothing short of it has,” replied Amanda; “ therefore pity, and do not aggravate my feelings by pointing out the consequences, which will attend the sacrifice I am compelled to make; only promise,” taking the prioress’s hand, “ only promise, in this great and sad emergency, to be my friend.”

Her looks, her words, her agonies, stopped short all the prioress was going to say. She thought it would be barbarity any longer to dwell upon the ill consequences of an action, which she was now convinced some fatal necessity compelled her to; she therefore gave her all the consolation now in her power, by assuring her she should immediately think about some place for her to retire to, and would keep all which had passed between them a profound secret. She then insisted on Amanda’s lying down, and trying to compose herself; she brought her drops to take, and, drawing the curtains about her, retired from the room. In two hours she returned; though she entered the chamber softly, Amanda immediately drew back the curtain, and appeared much more composed than when the prioress had left her. The

good woman would not let her rise, but sat down on the bed to tell her what she had contrived for her.

"She had a relation in Scotland," she said, "who, from reduced circumstances, had kept a school for many years; but, as the infirmities of age came on, she was not able to pay so much attention to her pupils as their friends thought requisite, and she had only been able to retain them by promising to get a person to assist her. As she thought her cousin (the prioress) more in the way of procuring such a one than herself, she had written to her for that purpose; a clever, well-behaved young woman, who would be satisfied with a small salary, was what she wanted.

"I should not mention such a place to you," said the prioress, "but that the necessity there is for your immediately retiring from lord Mortimer, leaves me no time to look out for another: but do not imagine I wish you to continue there: no, indeed, I should think it a pity such talents as you possess, should be buried in such obscurity. What I think is, that you can stay there till you grow more composed, and can look out for a better establishment."

"Do not mention my talents," said Amanda, "my mind is so enervated by grief, that it will be long before I can make any great exertion; and the place you have mentioned is, from its obscurity, just such a one as I desire to go to."

"There is, besides, another inducement," said the prioress, "namely, its being but a few miles from Fort-Patrick, to which place a fair wind will bring us in a few hours from this. I know the master of a little wherry, which is perpetually going backwards and forwards; he lives in this neighbourhood, and both he and his wife consider themselves under obligations to me, and will rejoice, I am sure, at an opportunity of obliging me: I shall therefore send for him this evening, informing him of the time you wish to go, and desire his care till he leaves you himself at Mrs. Macpherson's."

Amanda thanked the prioress, who proceeded to say, "that, on the presumption of her going to her cou-

sin's, she had already written a letter for her to take ; but wished to know whether she would be mentioned by her own or a fictitious name. ,

Amanda replied, "by a fictitious one," and, after a little consideration, fixed on that of Frances Donald, which the prioress accordingly inserted, and then read the letter.

TO MRS. MACPHERSON.

"Dear cousin,

"The bearer of this letter, Frances Donald, is the young person I have procured you for an assistant in your school. I have known her some time, and can vouch for her cleverness and discretion. She is well born and well educated, and has seen better days ; but the wheel of fortune is continually turning, and she bears her misfortunes with a patience, that, to me, is the best proof she could give of a real good disposition. I have told her you give but ten pounds a year ; her going proves she is not dissatisfied with the salary. I am sorry to hear you are troubled with rheumatic pains, and hope, when you have more time to take care of yourself, you will grow better. All the sisters join me in thanking you for your kind inquiries after them. We do tolerably well in the little school we keep, and trust our gratitude to Heaven, for its present goodness, will obtain a continuance of it. I beg to hear from you soon,

And am, my dear cousin,

Your sincere friend,

And affectionate kinswoman,

"St. Catharine's.

ELIZABETH DERMOT."

"I have not said as much as you deserve," said the prioress ; "but if the letter does not meet your approbation, I will make any alteration you please in it."—Amanda assured her "it did," and the prioress then said, "that lord Mortimer had been again at the convent to inquire after her, and was told she was better."—Aman-

da said, she would not see him till the hour she had appointed for his coming to supper.—The prioress agreed, “that as things were changed, she was right in being in his company as little as possible, and to prevent her being in his way, she should have her dinner and tea in her own room.” The cloth was accordingly laid in it, nor would the good-natured prioress depart till she saw Amanda eat something. Sister Mary, she said, was quite anxious to come in, and perform the part of an attendant, but was prevented by her.

The distraction of Amanda’s thoughts was now abated, by having every thing adjusted relative to her future conduct, and the company of the prioress, who returned to her as soon as she had dined, prevented her losing the little composure she had with such difficulty acquired.

She besought the prioress not to delay writing after her departure, and to relate faithfully every thing which happened in consequence of her flight. She entreated her not to let a mistaken compassion for her feelings influence her to conceal any thing, as any thing like the appearance of concealment in her letter would only torture her with anxiety and suspense.

The prioress solemnly promised she would obey her request, and Amanda with tears regretted that she was now unable to recompense the kindness of the prioress and the sisterhood, as she had lately intended doing, by lord Mortimer’s desire, as well as her own inclination. The prioress begged her not to indulge any regret on that account, as they considered themselves already liberally recompensed, and had besides quite sufficient to satisfy their humble desires.

Amanda said she meant to leave a letter on the dressing-table for lord Mortimer, with the notes which he had given her enclosed in it. “The picture and the ring,” said she, with a falling tear, “I cannot part with.” For the things which she had ordered from the neighbouring town, she told the prioress she would leave money in her hands, also a present for the woman who had been engaged to attend her to England, as

some small recompence for her disappointment. She meant only to take some linen and her mourning to Scotland; the rest of her things, including her music and books, at some future and better period, might be sent after her.

Amanda was indebted to the sisterhood for three months board and lodging, which was ten guineas. Of the two hundred pounds which lord Mortimer had given her on leaving Castle Carberry, one hundred and twenty pounds remained, so that, though unable to answer the claims of gratitude, she thanked Heaven she was able to fulfil those of justice. This she told the prioress, who instantly declared, "that, in the name of the whole sisterhood, she would take upon her to refuse any thing from her." Amanda did not contest the point, being secretly determined how to act. The prioress drank tea with her. When over, Amanda said she would lie down, in order to try and be composed against lord Mortimer came. The prioress accordingly withdrew, saying, "she should not be disturbed till then."

By this means Amanda was enabled to be in readiness for delivering her letter to lord Cherbury at the proper hour. Her heart beat with apprehension as it approached; she dreaded lord Mortimer again surprising her amongst the ruins, or some of the nuns following her to them. At last the clock gave the signal for keeping her appointment. She arose trembling from the bed, and opened the door; she listened, and no noise announced any one's being near; the moments were precious; she glided through the gallery, and had the good fortune to find the hall door open. She hastened to the ruins, and found lord Cherbury waiting there. She presented him the letter in silence. He received it in the same manner; but when he saw her turning away to depart, he snatched her hand, and, in a voice that denoted the most violent agitation, exclaimed, "tell me, tell me, miss Fitzalan, is this letter propitious?" "It is," replied she, in a faltering voice. "Then may heaven eternally bless you," cried he, falling at her feet, and wrapping

his arms about her. His posture shocked Amanda, and his detention terrified her.

"Let me go, my lord," said she: "in pity to me, in mercy to yourself, let me go, for one moment longer and we may be discovered."

Lord Cherbury started up.—"From whom," cried he, "can I hear about you?"

"From the prioress of St. Catharine's," replied Amanda, in a trembling voice, "she only will know the secret of my retreat."

He again snatched her hand, and kissed it with vehemence. "Farewell, thou angel of a woman!" he exclaimed, and disappeared among the ruins. Amanda hurried back, dreading every moment to meet lord Mortimer; but she neither met him nor any other person. She had scarcely gained her chamber, ere the prioress came to inform her, his lordship was in the parlour. She instantly repaired to it. The air had a little changed the deadly hue of her complexion, so that from her looks he supposed her better, and her words strengthened the supposition. She talked with him, forced herself to eat some supper, and checked the tears from falling, which sprang from her eyes whenever he mentioned the happiness they must experience when united, the pleasure they should enjoy at Thornbury, and the delight lady Martha and lady Araminta would experience, whenever they met.

Amanda desired him not to come to breakfast the next morning, nor to the convent till after dinner, as she would be so busy preparing for her journey, she would have no time to devote to him. He wanted to convince her he could not retard her preparations by coming, but she would not allow this.

Amanda passed another wretched night. She breakfasted in the morning with the nuns, who expressed their regret at losing her—a regret, however, mitigated by the hope of shortly seeing her again, as lord Mortimer had promised to bring her to Castle Carberry, as soon as she had visited his friends in England. This was a trying moment to Amanda; she could scarcely conceal

her emotions, to keep herself from weeping aloud, at the mention of a promise never to be fulfilled. She swallowed her breakfast in haste, and withdrew to her chamber on pretence of settling her things. Here she was immediately followed by the nuns, entreating they might severally be employed in assisting her. She thanked them with her usual sweetness, but assured them no assistance was necessary, as she had but a few things to pack, never having unlocked the chests which had come from Castle Carberry. They retired on receiving this assurance, and Amanda, fearful of another interruption, sat down to write her farewell letter to lord Mortimer.

TO LORD MORTIMER.

“ MY LORD,

“ A destiny which neither of us can controul forbids our union. In vain were obstacles encountered and apparently overcome; one has arisen to oppose it, which we never could have thought of, and in yielding to it, as I am compelled by dire necessity to do, I find myself separated from you without the remotest hope of our ever meeting again—without being allowed to justify my conduct, or offer one excuse which might, in some degree, palliate the abominable ingratitude and deceit I may appear guilty of; appear, I say, for in reality my heart is a stranger to either, and is now agonized at the sacrifice it is compelled to make: but I will not hurt your lordship’s feelings by dwelling on my own sufferings. Already have I caused you too much pain, but never again shall I cross your path to disturb your peace, and shade your prospect of felicity: no, my lord, removed to a tedious distance, the name I love, no more will sink upon my ear; the delusive form of happiness no more will mock me.

“ Had every thing turned out according to my wishes, perhaps happiness, so great, so unexpected, might have produced a dangerous revolution in my sentiments, and withdrawn my thoughts too much from heaven to

earth: if so, oh! blessed be the power that snatched from my lips the cup of joy, though at the very moment I was tasting the delightful beverage.

“ I cannot bid you pity me, though I know myself deserving of compassion; I cannot bid you forbear condemning me, though I know myself undeserving of censure. In this letter I enclose the notes I received from your lordship; the picture and the ring I have retained; they will soon be my only vestiges of former happiness. Farewell, lord Mortimer, my dear and valuable friend, farewell for ever! May that peace, that happiness you so truly deserve to possess, be yours, and may they never again meet with such interruptions as they have received from the unfortunate

AMANDA M. FITZALAN.”

This letter was blistered with her tears: she laid it in a drawer till evening, and then proceeded to pack whatever she meant to take with her in a little trunk. In the midst of this business, the prioress came in to inform her she had seen the master of the wherry, and settled every thing with him. He not only promised to be secret, but to sail the following morning at four o'clock, and conduct her himself to Mrs. Macpherson's. About three he was to come to the convent for her; he had also promised to provide every thing necessary on board for her.

Matters being thus arranged, Amanda told the prioress, to avoid suspicion, she would leave the money she intended for the woman, who had been engaged to accompany her to England, on her dressing-table, with a few lines purporting who it was for. The prioress approved of her doing so, as it would prevent any one from suspecting she was privy to her departure. She was obliged to leave her directly, and Amanda took the opportunity of putting up the fifteen guineas in a paper, five for the woman, and ten for the nuns. She wished to do more for them, but feared to obey the dictates of generosity, while her own prospect of provision was so uncertain. She wrote as follows to the prioress:

TO MRS. DERMOT.

"DEAR MADAM,

"Was my situation otherwise than it now is, be assured I never should have offered the trifle you will find in this paper as any way adequate to the discharge of my debt; to you and your amiable companions I regret my inability, more than I can express, of proving my gratitude to you and them for all your kindnesses; never will they be obliterated from my remembrance, and He who has promised to regard those that befriend the orphan will reward you for them. I have also left five guineas for the woman you were so good as to engage to attend me to England. I trust she will think them a sufficient recompence for any trouble or disappointment I may have occasioned her.

"Farewell, dear Mrs. Dermot; dear and amiable inhabitants of St. Catharine's, farewell. As Amanda will never forget you in her's, so let her never be forgotten in your orisons, and never cease to believe her

Grateful, sincere, and affectionate,

A. M. FITZALAN."

By this time she was summoned to dinner. Her spirits were sunk in the lowest dejection at the idea of leaving the amiable woman who had been so kind to her, and, above all, at the idea of the last sad evening she was to pass with lord Mortimer. His lordship came early to the convent. The dejected looks of Amanda immediately struck him, and renewed all his apprehensions about her health. She answered his tender enquiries by saying she was fatigued.

"Perhaps," said he, "you will like to rest one day, and not commence your journey to-morrow?"

"No, no," cried Amanda, "it shall not be deferred. To-morrow," continued she, with a smile of anguish, "I will commence it."

Lord Mortimer thanked her for a resolution he imagined dictated by an ardent desire to please him, but at the same time again expressed his fears that she was ill.

Amanda perceived that, if she did not exert herself, her dejection would lead him to enquiries she would find it difficult to evade; but, as to exert herself was impossible, in order to withdraw his attention, in some degree, from herself, she proposed that, as this was the last evening they would be at the convent, they would invite the nuns to drink tea with them. Lord Mortimer immediately acquiesced in the proposal, and the invitation being sent, was accepted.

But the conversation of the whole party was of a melancholy kind. Amanda was so much beloved among them, that the prospect of losing her filled them with a regret which even the idea of seeing her soon again could not banish. About nine, which was their hour for prayers, they rose to retire, and would have taken leave of lord Mortimer had he not informed them, that, on miss Fitzalan's account, he would not commence the journey next day till ten o'clock, at which time he would again have the pleasure of seeing them.

When they withdrew he endeavoured to cheer Amanda, and besought her to exert her spirits. Of his own accord, he said, he would leave her early, that she might get as much rest as possible against the ensuing day. He accordingly rose to depart. What an agonizing moment for Amanda!—to hear, to behold the man, so tenderly beloved, for the last time; to think that ere that hour the next night she should be far, far away from him, considered as a treacherous and ungrateful creature, despised, perhaps execrated as a source of perpetual disquiet and sorrow to him! Her heart swelled at those ideas with feelings she thought would burst it, and, when he folded her to his bosom and bid her be cheerful against the next morning, she involuntarily returned the pressure, by straining him to her heart in convulsive agitation, whilst a shower of tears burst from her.—Lord Mortimer, shocked and surprised at these tears and emo-

tions, resented her, for her agitation was contagious, and he trembled so much he could not support her; then, throwing himself at her feet, "My Amanda! my beloved girl!" cried he, "what is the matter? Is any wish of your heart yet unfulfilled? If so, let no mistaken notion of delicacy influence you to conceal it; on your happiness, you know, mine depends; tell me, therefore, I entreat, I conjure you, tell me, is there any thing I can do to restore you to cheerfulness?"

"Oh! no," said Amanda, "all that a mortal could do to serve me you have already done, and my gratitude, the fervent sense I have of the obligations I lie under to you, I cannot fully express. May heaven," raising her streaming eyes, "may heaven recompense your goodness, by bestowing the choicest of its blessings on you!"

"That," said lord Mortimer, half smiling, "it has already done, by giving you to me, for you are the choicest blessing it could bestow; but tell me what has dejected you in this manner? something more than fatigue I am sure."

Amanda assured him "he was mistaken," and, fearful of his further inquiries, told him, "she only waited for his departure to retire to rest, which she was convinced would do her good."

Lord Mortimer instantly rose from his kneeling posture: "Farewell, then, my dear Amanda," cried he, "farewell, and be well and cheerful against the morning."

She pressed his hand between her's, and, laying her cold wet cheek upon it, "Farewell," said she; "when we next meet, I shall, I trust, be well and cheerful; for in heaven alone (thought she at that moment) we shall ever meet again."

On the spot on which he left her, Amanda stood motionless, till she heard the hall door close after him; all composure then forsook her, and, in an agony of tears and sobs, she threw herself on the seat he had occupied. The good prioress, guessing what her feelings at this minute must be, was at hand, and came in with drops

and water, which she forced her to take, and mingled the tears of sympathy with her's.

Her soothing attentions in a little time had the effect she desired. They revived, in some degree, her unhappy young friend, who exclaimed, "that the severest trial she could ever possibly experience was now over."

"And will, I trust and believe," replied the prioress, "even in this life, be yet rewarded."

It was agreed that Amanda should put on her habit; and be prepared against the man came for her. The prioress promised, as soon as the house was at rest, to follow her to her chamber.—Amanda accordingly went to her apartment, and put on her travelling dress. She was soon followed by the prioress, who brought in bread, wine, and cold chicken; but the full heart of Amanda would not allow her to partake of them, and her tears, in spite of her efforts to restrain them, again burst forth. "She was sure," she said, "the prioress would immediately let her know if any intelligence arrived of her brother, and she again besought her to write as soon as possible after her departure, and to be minute."

She left the letters, one for lord Mortimer and the other for the prioress, on the table, and then, with a kind of melancholy impatience, waited for the man, who was punctual to the appointed hour of three, and announced his arrival by a tap at the window. She instantly rose, and embraced the prioress in silence, who, almost as much affected as herself, had only power to say, "God bless you, my dear child, and make you as happy as you deserve to be."

Amanda shook her head mournfully, as if to say "she expected no happiness," and then, softly stepping along the gallery, opened the hall-door, where she found the man waiting. Her little trunk was already lying in the hall; she pointed it out to him, and as soon as he had taken it he departed. Never did any being feel more forlorn than Amanda now did; what she did when quitting the marchioness's was comparatively happiness to what she now endured. She then looked forward to the protection, comfort, and support of a tender parent; now

she had nothing in view which could in the least cheer or alleviate her feelings. She cast her mournful eyes around, and the objects she beheld heightened, if possible, her anguish. She beheld the old trees which shaded the grave of her father waving in the morning breeze, and, oh! how fervently at that moment did she wish that, by his side, she was laid beneath their shelter! she turned from them with a heart-rending sigh, which reached the ear of the man who trudged before her. He instantly turned, and, seeing her pale and trembling, told her he had an arm at her service, which she gladly accepted, being scarcely able to support herself. A small boat was waiting for them about half a mile above Castle Carberry; it conveyed them in a few moments to the vessel, which the master previously told her would be under weigh directly. She was pleased to find his wife on board, who conducted Amanda to the cabin, where she found breakfast laid out with neatness for her. She took some tea and a little bread, being almost exhausted with fatigue. Her companion, imputing her dejection to fears of crossing the sea, assured her the passage would be very short, and bid her observe how plainly they could see the Scottish hills, now partially gilded by the beams of the rising sun; but, beautiful as they appeared, Amanda's eyes were turned from them to a more beautiful object, Castle Carberry. She then asked the woman if she thought the castle could be seen from the opposite coast, and she replied in the negative.

"I am sorry for it," said Amanda, mournfully. She continued at the window for the melancholy pleasure of contemplating it, till compelled by sickness to lie down on the bed. The woman attended her with the most assiduous care, and about four o'clock in the afternoon informed her they had reached Port Patrick. Amanda arose, and, sending for the master, told him, "As she did not wish to go to an inn, she would thank him to hire a chaise to carry her directly to Mrs. Macpherson's." He said she should be obeyed, and Amanda having settled with him for her passage, he went on shore for that pur-

pose, and soon returned to inform her a carriage was ready. Amanda, having thanked his wife for her kind attention, stepped into the boat, and entered the chaise the moment she landed. Her companion told her he was well acquainted with Mrs. Macpherson, having frequently carried packets from Mrs. Dermot to her. She lived about five miles from Port Patrick, he said, and near the sea-coast. They accordingly soon reached her habitation; it was a small low house, of a greyish colour, situated in the field, almost covered with thistles, and divided from the road by a ragged looking wall; the sea lay at a small distance from it: the coast hereabouts was extremely rocky, and the prospect on every side wild and dreary in the extreme.

Amanda's companion, by her desire, went first into the house, to prepare Mrs. Macpherson for her reception. He returned in a few minutes, and, telling her she was happy at her arrival, conducted her into the house. From a narrow passage they turned into a small gloomy-looking parlour with a clay floor. Mrs. Macpherson was sitting in an old-fashioned arm chair; her face was sharp and meagre, her stature low, and, like Otway's ancient beldame, doubled with age: her gown was grey stuff, and, though she was so low, it was not long enough to reach her ankle; her black silk apron was curtailed in the same manner, and over a little mob cap she wore a handkerchief tied under her chin. She just nodded to Amanda on her entrance, and, putting on a large pair of spectacles, surveyed her without speaking. Amanda presented Mrs. Dermot's introductory letter, and then, though unbidden, seated herself on the window-seat till she had perused it. Her trunk in the mean time was brought in, and she paid for the carriage, requesting, at the same time, the master of the vessel to wait till she had heard what Mrs. Macpherson would say. At length the old lady broke silence, and her voice was quite as sharp as her face.

"So, child," said she, again surveying Amanda, and elevating her spectacles to have a better opportunity of speaking, "why, to be sure I did desire my cousin to

get me a young person, but not one so young, so very young, as you appear to be."

"Lord bless you!" said the man, "if that is a fault, why it is one will mend every day."

"Ay, ay;" cried the old dame, "but it will mend a little too slow for me: however, child, as you are so well recommended, I will try you. My cousin says something about your being well born, and having seen better days: however, child, I tell you beforehand, I shall not consider what you have been, but what you are now; I shall therefore expect you to be mild, regular, and attentive; no flaunting, no gadding, no chattering, but staid, sober, and modest."

"Bless your heart," said the man, "if you look in her face, you will see she'll be all you desire."

"Ay, ay, so you may say; but I should be very sorry to depend upon the promise of a face; like the heart, it is often treacherous and deceitful: so pray, young woman, tell me, and remember I expect a conscientious answer, whether you think you will be able to do as I wish."

"Yes, madam," replied Amanda, in a voice almost choked by the variety of painful emotions she experienced.

"Well then we are agreed, as you know the salary I give:" The master of the vessel now took his leave, never having been asked by Mrs. Macpherson to take any refreshment.

The heart of Amanda sunk within her from the moment she entered Mrs. Macpherson's door; she shuddered at being left with so unsocial a being in a place so wild and dreary; a hovel near St. Catharine's she would have thought a palace in point of real comfort to her present habitation, as she then could have enjoyed the soothing society of the tender and amiable nuns. The presence of the master of the vessel, from the pity and concern he manifested for her, had something consolatory in it, and when he left the room she burst into tears, as if then, and not till then, she had been utterly abandoned.

done. She hastily followed him out: "Give my love, my best love," said she, sobbing violently, and laying her trembling hand on his, "to Mrs. Dermot, and tell her, oh! tell her to write directly, and give me some comfort."

"You may depend on my doing so," replied he; "but cheer up, my dear young lady; what though the old dame in the parlour is a little cranky, she will mend, no doubt, so Heaven bless you, and make you as happy as you deserve to be."

Sad and silent Amanda returned to the parlour, and seating herself in the window, strained her eyes after the carriage, which had brought her to this dismal spot.

CHAP. X.

Of joys departed—never to return,
How bitter the remembrance!

BLAIR.

"WELL, child," said Mrs. Macpherson, "do you choose any thing?"

"I thank you, madam," replied Amanda, "I should like a little tea."

"Oh! as to tea, I have just taken my own, and the things are all washed and put by; but if you like a glass of spirits and water, and a crust of bread, you may have it."

Amanda said she did not.

"Oh! very well," cried Mrs. Macpherson, "I shall not press you, for supper will soon be ready." She then desired Amanda to draw a chair near her's, and began torturing her with a variety of minute and trifling questions, relative to herself, the nuns, and the neighbourhood of St. Catharine's.

Amanda briefly said, "her father had been in the army, that many disappointments and losses had prevented his making any provision for her, and that on his death, which happened in the neighbourhood of the convent, the nuns had taken her out of compassion till she procured an establishment for herself."

"Ay, and a comfortable one you have procured yourself, I promise you," said Mrs. Macpherson, "if it is not your own fault." She then told Amanda, "she would amuse her by showing her her house and other concerns." This indeed was easily done, as it consisted but of the parlour, two closets adjoining it, and the kitchen on the opposite side of the entry; the other concerns were a small garden planted with kale, and the field covered with thistles. "A good comfortable tenement this," cried Mrs. Macpherson, shaking her head with much satisfaction, as she leaned upon her ebony-headed cane, and cast her eyes around. She bid Amanda admire the fine prospect before the door, and calling to a red-haired and bare-legged girl, desired her to cut some thistles to put into the fire, and hasten the boiling of the kale. On returning to the parlour she unlocked a press, and took out a pair of coarse brown sheets to air for Amanda. She herself slept in one closet, and in the other was a bed for Amanda, laid on a half-decayed bedstead, without curtains, and covered with a blue stuff quilt; the closet was lightened by one small window, which looked into the garden, and its furniture consisted of a broken chair, and a piece of looking-glass stuck to the wall.

The promised supper was at length served; it consisted of a few heads of kale, some oaten bread, a jug of water, and a small phial half full of spirits, which Amanda would not taste, and the old lady herself took but sparingly; they were lighted by a small candle, which, on retiring to their closets, Mrs. Macpherson cut between them.

Amanda felt relieved by being alone. She could now without restraint indulge her tears, and her reflections; that she could never enjoy any satisfaction with a being

so ungracious in her manners, and so contracted in her notions, she foresaw; but, disagreeable as her situation must be, she felt inclined to continue in it, from the idea of its giving her more opportunities of hearing from Mrs. Dermot than she could have in almost any other place, and by these opportunities alone could she expect to hear of lord Mortimer, and to hear of him, even the most trifling circumstance, though divided, for ever divided from him, would be a source of exquisite though melancholy pleasure.

To think she should hear of him, at once soothed and fed her melancholy; it lessened the violence of sorrow, yet, without abating its intenceness; it gave a delicious sadness to her soul; she thought it would be ill exchanged for any feelings short of these she must have experienced if her wishes had been accomplished; she enjoyed the pensive luxury of virtuous grief, which mitigates the sharp

With gracious drops
Of cordial pleasure—

and which Akenside so beautifully describes: nor can I forbear quoting the lines he has written to illustrate this truth:

Ask the faithful youth:

Why the cold urn of her, whom long he lov'd,
So often fills his arms, so often draws
His lonely footsteps at the silent hour,
To pay the mournful tribute of his tears?
O, he will tell thee, that the wealth of worlds
Should ne'er seduce his bosom to forego
That sacred hour, when stealing from the noise
Of care and envy, sweet remembrance sooths
With virtue's kindest looks, his aching heart,
And turns his tears to rapture.

Fatigued by the contending emotions she experienced as well as the sickness she went through at sea, Amanda soon retired to her flock bed, and fell into a profound slumber, in which she continued till roused in the morn-

ing by the shrill voice of Mrs. Macpherson, exclaiming, as she rapped at the door, "come, come, Frances, it is time to rise."

Amanda started from her sleep, forgetting both the name she had adopted, and the place where she was; but Mrs. Macpherson again calling her to rise, restored her to her recollection. She replied, she would attend her directly, and hurrying on her clothes was with her in a few minutes. She found the old lady seated at the breakfast table, who, instead of returning her salutation, said, "that on account of her fatigue she excused her lying so long in bed this morning, for it was now near eight o'clock; but in future she would expect her to rise before six in summer, and seven in winter, adding, as there was no clock, she would rap at the door for that purpose every morning."

Amanda assured her, "she was fond of rising early, and always accustomed to it." The tea was now poured out; it was of the worst kind, and sweetened with coarse brown sugar; the bread was oaten, and there was no butter. Amanda, unused to such unpalatable fare, swallowed a little of it with difficulty, and then with some hesitation, said, "she would prefer milk to tea." Mrs. Macpherson frowned exceedingly at this, and, after continuing silent a few minutes, said, "she had really made tea for two people, and she could not think of having it wasted; besides (she added) the economy of her house was so settled she could not infringe it for any one. She kept no cow herself, and only took in as much milk as served her tea, and an old tabby cat."

Amanda replied it was of no consequence, and Mrs. Macpherson said, indeed she supposed so, and muttered something of people giving themselves airs they had no pretensions to. The tea-table was removed before nine, when the school began; it consisted of about thirty girls, most of them daughters to farmers in the neighbourhood. Amanda and they being introduced to each other, and she being previously informed what they were taught, was desired to commence the task of instructing

them entirely herself that day, as Mrs. Macpherson wanted to observe her manner—a most unpleasant task indeed for poor Amanda, whose mind and body were both harassed by anxiety and fatigue. As she had undertaken it, however, she resolved to go through it with as much cheerfulness and alacrity as possible; she accordingly acquitted herself to the satisfaction of Mrs. Macpherson, who only found fault with her too great gentleness, saying, the children would never fear her. At two the school broke up, and Amanda almost as delighted as the children to be at liberty, was running into the garden to try if the air would be of use to a violent head-ach, when she was called back to put the forms and other things in order; she coloured, and stood motionless, till recollecting that if she refused to obey Mrs. Macpherson, a quarrel would probably ensue, which, circumstanced as she was, without knowing where to go, would be dreadful, she silently performed what she had been desired to do. Dinner was then brought in; it was as simple and as sparing as a Bramin could desire. When over, Mrs. Macpherson composed herself to take a nap in the large chair, without making any kind of apology to Amanda.

Left at liberty, Amanda would now have walked out, but it had just begun to rain, and every thing looked dreary and desolate; from the window in which she pensively sat, she had a view of the sea; it looked black and tempestuous, and she could distinguish its awful and melancholy roaring as it dashed against the rocks. The little servant girl, as she cleaned the kitchen, sung a dismal Scotch ditty, so that all conspired to oppress the spirits of Amanda with a dejection greater than she had ever before experienced: all hope was now extinct, the social ties of life seemed broken never more to be reunited. She had now no father, no friend, no lover, as heretofore, to soothe her feelings, or alleviate her sorrows. Like the poor Belyidera, she might have said,

" There was a time
 Her cries and sorrows
 Were not despis'd, when, if she chaac'd to sigh,
 Or but look sad, a friend or parent
 Would have ta'en her in their arms,
 Eas'd her declining head upon their breasts,
 And never left her till he found the cause ;
 But now let her weep seas,
 Cry till she rend the earth, sigh till she burst
 Her heart asunder, she is disregarded."

Like a tender sapling, transplanted from its native soil, she seemed to stand alone, exposed to every adverse blast. Her tears gushed forth, and fell in showers down her pale cheeks. She sighed forth the name of her father. " Oh! dear and most benignant of men," she exclaimed, " my father and my friend; were you living I should not be so wretched; pity and consolation would then be mine. Oh! my father, one of the dreariest caverns in yonder rocks would be an asylum of comfort were you with me; but I am selfish in these regrets, certain as I am, that you exchanged this life of wretchedness for one of eternal peace, for one where you were again united to your Malvina."

Her thoughts adverted to what lord Mortimer, in all probability, now thought of her; but this was too dreadful to dwell upon, convinced as she was, that from appearances, he must think most unfavourably of her. His picture, which hung in her bosom, she drew out; she gazed with agonizing tenderness upon it; she pressed it to her lips, and prayed for the original. From this indulgence of sorrow she was disturbed by the waking of Mrs. Macpherson. She hastily wiped away her tears, and hid the beloved picture. The evening past most disagreeably. Mrs. Macpherson was tedious and inquisitive in her discourse, and it was almost as painful to listen as to answer her.—Amanda was happy when the hour of retiring to bed arrived, and relieved her from what might be called a kind of mental bondage.

Such was the first day Amanda passed in her new habitation, and a week elapsed in the same manner without any variation, except that on Sunday she had a cessation from her labours, and went to the kirk with Mrs. Macpherson. At the end of the week she found herself so extremely ill from the fatigue and confinement she endured, as Mrs. Macpherson would not let her walk out, saying, "gadders were good for nothing;" that she told her, "except allowed to go out every evening, she must leave her, as she could not bear so sedentary a life." Mrs. Macpherson looked disconcerted, and grumbled a great deal; but as Amanda spoke in a resolute manner, she was frightened lest she should put her threats into execution, she was so extremely useful in the school, and at last told her, "She might take as much exercise as she pleased every day after dinner."

Amanda gladly availed herself of this permission, she explored all the romantic paths about the house, but the one she chiefly delighted to take was that which led to the sea; she loved to ramble about the beach, when fatigued to sit down upon the fragment of a rock, and look towards the opposite shore; vainly then would she try to discover some of the objects she knew so well: Castle Carberry was utterly undistinguishable; but she knew the spot on which it stood, and derived a melancholy pleasure from looking that way.

In these retired rambles she would freely indulge her tears, and gaze upon the picture of lord Mortimer. She feared no observation, the rocks formed a kind of recess about her, and in going to them she seldom met a creature.

A fortnight passed in this way, and she began to feel surprise and uneasiness, at not hearing from Mrs. Dermot; if much longer silent, she resolved on writing, feeling it impossible to endure much longer the agony her ignorance of lord Mortimer's proceeding gave her. The very morning previous to the one she had fixed for writing, she saw a sailor coming to the house, and believing he was the bearer of a letter to her, she forgot every thing but her feelings at the moment, and

starting from her seat ran from the room—she met him a few yards from the house, and then perceived he was one of the sailors of the vessel she had come over in. “You have a letter for me, I hope?” said Amanda. The man nodded, and fumbling in his bosom for a moment, pulled out a large packet, which Amanda snatched with eager transport from him; and knowing she could not attempt to bring him into the house for refreshment, gave him a crown to procure it elsewhere, which he received with thankfulness, and departed. She then returned to the parlour, and was hastening to her closet to read the letter, when Mrs. Macpherson stopped her. “Hey-day;” cried she, “what is the matter? What is all this fuss about? Why, one would think that was a love-letter, you are so very eager to read it!”

“It is not then, I can assure you,” said Amanda.

“Well, well, and who is it from?”—Amanda reflected, that if she said from Mrs. Dermot, a number of impertinent questions would be asked her, she therefore replied, “from a very particular friend.”

“From a very particular friend! Well, I suppose, there is nothing about life or death in it, so you may wait till after dinner to read it, and pray sit down now, and hear the children their spelling lessons.” This was a tantalizing moment to Amanda; she stood hesitating whether she should obey, till reflecting, that if she went now to read the packet, she would most probably be interrupted ere she had got half through the contents, she resolved on putting it up till after dinner. The moment at last came for Mrs. Macpherson’s usual nap, and Amanda instantly hastened to a recess amongst the rocks where seating herself, she broke the seal: the envelop contained two letters: the first she cast her eyes upon was directed in lord Cherbury’s hand. She trembled, tore it open, and read as follows:

TO MISS FITZALAN.

“In vain, my dear madam, do you say you never will receive pecuniary favours from me. It is not you, but I, should lie under obligations from their acceptance.

I should deem myself the most ungrateful of mankind if I did not insist on carrying this point: I am just returned to London, and shall immediately order my lawyer to draw up a deed, entitling you to three hundred pounds a year, which, when completed, I shall transmit to the prioress (as I have this letter) to send to you. I am sensible, indeed, that I never can recompense the sacrifice you have made me; the feelings it has excited I shall not attempt to express, because language could never do them justice; but you may conceive what I must feel for the being who has preserved me from dishonour and destruction. I am informed lord Mortimer has left Ireland, and therefore daily expect him in town. I have now not only every hope, but every prospect of his complying with my wishes: this, I imagine, will be rather pleasing to you to hear, that you may know the sacrifice you have made is not made in vain; but will be attended with all the good consequences I expected to derive from it. I should again enjoy a tolerable degree of peace were I assured you were happy; but this is an assurance I will hope soon to receive, for if you are not happy, who has a right to expect being so? you whose virtue is so pure, whose generosity is so noble, so heroic, so far superior to any I have ever met with!

"That in this world, as well as the next, you may be rewarded for it, is, dear madam, the sincere wish of him, who has the honour to subscribe himself,

Your most grateful, most obliged,

And most obedient humble servant,

CHERBURY."

"Unfeeling man!" exclaimed Amanda, "how little is your heart interested in what you write, and how slight do you make of the sacrifice I have made you, how cruelly mention your hopes which are derived from the destruction of mine! No, sooner would I wander from door to door for charity, than be indebted to your

ostentatious gratitude for support, you whose treachery and vile deceit have ruined my happiness." She closed the letter, and, committing it to her pocket, took up the other, which she saw, by the direction, was from her dear Mrs. Dermot.

TO MISS-DONALD.

"Ah! my dear child, why extort a promise from me of being minute in relating every thing which happened in consequence of your departure, a promise so solemnly given that I dare not recede from it; yet most unwillingly do I keep it, sensible as I am that the intelligence I have to communicate will but aggravate your sorrows. Methinks I hear you exclaim at this, surely, my dear Mrs. Dermot, you who know my disposition and temper so well, might suppose I would receive such intelligence with a fortitude and patience that would prevent its materially injuring me: well, my dear, hoping this will be the case, I begin, without farther delay, to communicate particulars.

"You left me, you may remember, about three o'clock; I then went to bed, but so fatigued and oppressed I could scarcely sleep, and was quite unrefreshed by what I did get. After prayers I repaired to the parlour, where the assiduous care of sister Mary had already prepared every thing for your breakfast and lord Mortimer's. I told the sisters not to appear till they were sent for. I had not been long alone when lord Mortimer came in, cheerful, blooming, animated. Never did I see happiness so strongly impressed in any countenance as in his; he looked indeed the lover about receiving the precious reward of constancy. He asked me had I seen you? I answered no. He soon grew impatient, said you were a lazy girl, and feared you would make a bad traveller. He then rang the bell, and desired the maid to go and call you. Oh! my dear girl, my heart almost died within me at this moment; I averted my head, and pretended to be looking in the garden, to conceal my confusion.—The maid returned in a few minutes, and said you were not above. Well, said lord Mortimer, she is in some other apartment;—

pray search, and hasten her hither. In a few minutes after she departed, sister Mary, all pale and breathless, rushed into the room. "Oh, heavens!" cried she, "Miss Fitzalan cannot be found, but here are two letters I found on her dressing-table, one for you, madam, and one for lord Mortimer." I know not how he looked at this instant, for a guilty consciousness came over my mind, which prevented my raising my eyes to his. I took the letter in silence, opened, but had no power to read it. Sister Mary stood by me, wringing her hands and weeping, as she exclaimed, "What—what does she say to you?" I could neither answer her nor move, till a deep sigh, or rather groan, from lord Mortimer roused me. I started from my seat, and perceived him pale and motionless, the letter open in his hand, upon which his eyes were rivetted. I threw open the garden door to give him air: this a little revived him. "Be comforted, my lord," said I. He shook his head mournfully, and, waving his hand for me neither to speak or follow him, passed into the garden. "Blessed heaven!" said sister Mary again, "what does she say to you?" I gave her your letter, and desired her to read it aloud, for the tears which flowed at the affecting situation of lord Mortimer quite obscured my sight; and here, my dear child, I must declare that you have been too generous, and also, that the sum you betrayed us into taking, is but considered as a loan by us. But, to return to my first subject, the alarm concerning you now became general, and the nuns crowded into the room, grief and consternation in every countenance. In about half an hour I saw lord Mortimer returning to the parlour; and I then dismissed them. He had been endeavouring to compose himself, but his efforts for doing so were ineffectual. He trembled, was as pale as death, and spoke with a faltering voice. He gave me your letter to read, and I put mine into his hand. "Well, my lord," said I, on perusing it, "we must rather pity than condemn her."

"From my soul," cried he, "I pity her—I pity such a being as Amanda Fitzalan, for being the slave, the

prey of vice ; but she has been cruel to me, she has deceived, inhumanly deceived me, and blasted my peace for ever."

" Ah, my lord !" I replied, " though appearances are against her, I can never believe her guilty ; she who performed all the duties of a child as Amanda Fitzalan did, and who, to my certain knowledge, was preparing herself for a life of poverty, can never be a victim to vice."

" Mention her no more," cried he, " her name is like a dagger to my heart ; the suspicions, which but a few nights ago I could have killed myself for entertaining, are now confirmed ; they intrude on my mind from seeing Belgrave haunt this place, and from finding her secreted amidst the ruins at a late hour. Ah, heavens ! when I noticed her confusion, how easily did she exculpate herself to a heart prepossessed like mine in her favour. Unhappy—unfortunate girl—sad and pitiable is thy fate ! but may an early repentance snatch thee from the villain who now triumphs in thy ruin, and may we, since thus separated, never meet again. So well," continued he, " am I convinced of the cause of her flight, that I shall not make one inquiry after her." I again attempted to speak in your justification, but he silenced me ; I begged he would allow me to get him breakfast. He could touch nothing, and said he must return directly to Castle Carberry, but promised in the course of the day to see me again. I followed him into the hall ; at the sight of your corded boxes he started, and shrunk back with that kind of melancholy horror which we involuntarily feel when viewing any thing that belonged to a dear lost friend. I saw his emotions were agonizing ; he hid his face with his handkerchief, and with a hasty step ascended to his carriage, which, with a travelling chaise, was waiting at the door.

" I own I was often tempted, in the course of conversation, to tell him all I knew about you ; but the promise I had given you still rose to my view, and I fled, without your permission, I could not break it ; yet, my dear,

it is shocking to me to have such imputations cast on you. We cannot blame lord Mortimer for them; situated as you are with him, your conduct has naturally excited the most injurious suspicions; surely, my child, though not allowed to solve the mystery which has separated you from him, you may be allowed to vindicate your conduct; the sacrifice of fame and happiness is too much; consider and weigh well what I say, and, if possible, authorize me to inform lord Mortimer that I know of your retreat, and that you have retired neither to a lover or a friend, but to indigence and obscurity, led thither by a fatal necessity which you are bound to conceal, and feel more severely from that circumstance; he would, I am confident, credit my words, and then, instead of condemning, would join me in pitying you. The more I reflect on your unaccountable separation, the more am I bewildered in conjectures relative to it, and convinced more strongly than ever of the frailty of human joy, which, like a summer cloud, is bright, but transitory in its splendour. Lord Mortimer had left the convent about two hours, when his man arrived to dismiss the travelling chaise and attendants: I went out and inquired after his lord. "He is very bad, madam," said he, "and this has been a sad morning for us all." Never, my dear miss Fitzalan, did I, or the sisterhood, pass so melancholy a day. About five in the afternoon I received another visit from lord Mortimer; I was alone in the parlour, which he entered with an appearance of the deepest melancholy; one of his arms was in a sling; I was terrified lest he and Belgrave had met. He conjectured, I fancy, the occasion of the terror my countenance expressed, for he immediately said he had been ill on returning to Castle Carberry, and was bled. He was setting off for Dublin directly, he said, from whence he intended to embark for England; but I could not depart, my dear good friend (continued he), without bidding you farewell; besides, I wanted to assure you, that any promise which the unfortunate girl made you in my name, I shall hold sacred. I knew he alluded to the fifty pounds which he

desired you to tell me should be annually remitted to our house: I instantly therefore replied, that we had already been rewarded beyond our expectation or desires for any little attention we showed miss Fitzalan; but his generous resolution was not to be shaken. He looked weak and exhausted, I begged permission to make tea for him ere he commenced his journey. He consented. I went out of the room to order in the things. When I returned he was standing at the window which looked into the garden, so absorbed in meditation, he did not hear me. I heard him say, "cruel Amanda! is it thus you have rewarded my sufferings!" I retreated lest he should be confused by supposing himself overheard, and did not return till the maid brought in the tea-things.

"When he arose to depart he looked wavering and agitated, as if there was something on his mind he wanted courage to say. At last, in a faltering voice, while the deadly paleness of his complexion gave way to a deep crimson, he said, "I left miss Fitzalan's letter with you."

"Ah! my dear, never did man love woman better than he did, than he now loves you. I took the letter from my pocket and presented it to him. He put it in his bosom with an emotion that shook his whole frame. I hailed this as a favourable opportunity for again speaking in your favour: I bid him retrospect your past actions, and judge from them whether you could be guilty of a crime——. He stopped me short; and begged me to drop a subject he was unable to bear. Had he been less credulous, he said, he should now have been much happier; then wringing my hand he bid me farewell, in a voice and with a look that drew tears from me. "Ah, my dear madam!" cried he, "when this day commenced, how differently did I think it would have terminated!"

"I attended him to his carriage; he was obliged to lean upon his man as he ascended it, and his looks and agitation proclaimed the deepest distress. I have sent repeatedly to Castle Carberry since his departure to inquire

about him, and have been informed, that they expect to hear nothing of him till lord Cherbury's agent comes into the country, which will not be these three months.

"I have heard much of the good he did in the neighbourhood; he was a bounteous and benevolent spirit indeed; to our community he has been a liberal benefactor, and our prayers are daily offered up for his restoration to health and tranquillity. Among his other actions, when in Dublin, about three months ago, he ordered a monument to the memory of captain Fitzalan, which has been brought down since your departure, and put into the parish church where he is interred. I sent sister Mary and another of the nuns the other evening to see it, and they brought me a description of it; it is a white marble urn, ornamented with a foliage of laurel, and standing upon a pedestal of grey, on which the name of the deceased, and words to the following effect, are inscribed, namely, "That he whose memory it perpetuates, performed the duties of a christian and a soldier, with a fidelity and zeal that now warrants his enjoying a blessed recompense for both."

"I know this proof of respect to your father will deeply affect you; but I would not omit telling it, because, though it will affect, I am confident it will also please you. The late events have cast a gloom over all our spirits. Sister Mary now prays more than ever, and you know I have often told her she was only fit for a religious vocation; it is a bad world, she says, we live in, and she is glad she has so little to say to it.

"I am longing to hear from you. Pray tell me how you like Mrs. Macpherson; I have not seen her since her youth, and years often produce as great a change in the temper as the face; at any rate your present situation is too obscure for you to continue in, and as soon as your thoughts are collected and composed, you must look out for another. I hope you will be constant in writing; but, I tell you beforehand, you must not expect me to be punctual in my answers; I have been so long disused to writing, and my eyes are grown so weak; this letter has been the work of many days: besides, I have really no-

thing interesting to communicate; whenever I have, you may be sure I shall not lose a moment in informing you.

"The woman was extremely thankful for the five guineas you left her. Lord Mortimer sent five more by his man, so that she thinks herself well rewarded for any trouble or disappointment she experienced. If you wish to have any of your things sent to you, acquaint me; you know I shall never want an opportunity by the master of the vessel. He speaks largely of your generosity to him, and expresses much pity at seeing so young a person in such melancholy. May heaven, if it does not remove the source, at least lessen this melancholy.

"If possible, allow me to write to lord Mortimer, and vindicate you from the unworthy suspicions he entertains of you: I know he would believe me, and I should do it without discovering your retreat. Farewell, my dear girl; I recommend you constantly to the care of heaven, and beg you to believe you will ever be dear and interesting to the heart of

"St. Catherine's.

"ELIZABETH DERMOT."

Poor Amanda wept over this letter. "I have ruined the health, the peace of lord Mortimer," she exclaimed, "and he now execrates me as the source of his unhappiness. Oh! lord Cherbury, how severely do I suffer for your crime!" She began to think her virtue had been too heroic in the sacrifice she had made; but this was a transient idea, for when she reflected on the disposition of lord Cherbury, she was convinced the divulgement of his secret would have been followed by his death, and, great as was her present wretchedness she felt it light compared with the horrors she knew she would experience, could she accuse herself of being accessory to such an event; she now drank deeply of the cup of misery, but conscious rectitude, in some degree, lessened its noxious bitterness. She resolved to caution Mrs Dermot against mentioning her in any manner to lord Mortimer. She was well convinced he would be-

lieve no asseveration of her innocence, and, even if he did, what end could it answer? their union was opposed by an obstacle not to be surmounted, and if he sought and discovered her retreat, it would only lead to new sorrows, perhaps occasion some dreadful catastrophe. "We are separated," cried she, folding her hands together, "for ever separated in this world, but in heaven we shall again be re-united."

Absorbed in the reflections and sorrow this letter gave rise to, she remained in her seat till Mrs. Macpherson's little girl suddenly appeared before her, and said her mistress had made tea, and was wondering what kept her out so long.

Amanda instantly arose, and, carefully putting up the letter, returned to the house, where she found Mrs. Macpherson in a very bad humour. She grumbled exceedingly at Amanda's staying out so long, and, taking notice of her eyes being red and swelled, said, "indeed, she believed she was right in supposing she had got a love-letter."

Amanda made no reply, and the evening passed away in peevishness on one side, and silence on the other.

The charm, which had hitherto rendered Amanda's situation tolerable, was now dissolved, as Mrs. Dermot had said she could write but seldom, and scarcely expected to have any thing interesting to relate; she would gladly, therefore, have left Mrs. Macpherson immediately, but she knew not where to go. She resolved, however, ere winter was entirely set in, to request Mrs. Dermot to look out for some other place for her; as she had connexions in Scotland, she thought she might recommend her to them as a governess, or a fit person to do fine work for a lady.

She arose long before her usual hour the next morning, and wrote a letter expressive of her wishes and intentions to Mrs. Dermot, which she sent by a poor man who lived near the house to the post-town, rewarding him liberally for his trouble.

CHAP. XI.

Who knows the joys of friendship,
The trust, security, and mutual tenderness,
The double joys, where each is glad for both,
Friendship, our only wealth, our last retreat and
strength,
Secure against ill fortune and the world?

ROWE.

AMONG Mrs. Macpherson's pupils were two little girls, who pleased and interested Amanda greatly. Their father, for whom they were in mourning, had perished in a violent storm, and their mother had pined in health and spirits ever since the fatal accident. The kindness with which Amanda treated them, they repaid with gratitude and attention; it had a double effect upon their little hearts, from being contrasted with the sour austerity of Mrs. Macpherson; they told Amanda, in a whisper, one morning, that their mamma was coming to see their dear, good Frances Donald.

Accordingly, in the course of the day, Mrs. Duncan came; she was young and pleasing in her appearance: her weeds and deep dejection rendered her a most interesting object. She sat by Amanda, and took an opportunity, whilst Mrs. Macpherson was engaged with some of the children, to tell her in a low voice, "she was truly obliged to her for the great attention and kindness she showed her little girls, so unlike their former treatment at the school. The task of instructing them was hers," she said, "till her declining health and spirits rendered her no longer able to bear it." Amanda assured her, it was a pleasure to instruct minds so docile and sweet tempered as theirs. Mrs. Duncan, as she rose to depart, asked her and Mrs. Macpherson to tea that evening, which invitation was instantly accepted by

Mrs. Macpherson, who was extremely fond of being sociable every where but in her own house. Mrs. Duncan lived at but a little distance, and every thing in and about the house was neat and comfortable. She had an old neighbour in the parlour, who kept Mrs. Macpherson in chat, and gave her an opportunity of conversing freely with Amanda. She marked the delicacy of her looks, and said, "she believed she was ill qualified to endure so fatiguing a life as her present." She mentioned her own lonely and melancholy life, and the happiness she would derive from having such a companion, and expressed her hopes of often enjoying her society. Amanda said this would be impossible without disobliging Mrs. Macpherson, and Mrs. Duncan on reflection allowed it would be so. She then inquired if she ever walked; Amanda replied she did, and was asked where she generally rambled; by the sea-side, she replied.

Mrs. Duncan sighed deeply, and her eyes filled with tears: "it is there I generally ramble too," said she. This led to the mention of her late loss: "Mr. Duncan had been the kindest, best of husbands," she said: "the first years of their marriage were attended with difficulties, which were just removed when he was lost on a party of pleasure with several others. It was some consolation, however," continued Mrs. Duncan, "that the body was cast upon the shore, and I had the power of paying the last rites of decency and respect to him."

In short, between her and Amanda there appeared a mutual sympathy, which rendered them truly interesting to each other. From this period they met generally every evening, and passed many hours on the "sea-beat shore," talking and often weeping over "joys departed never to return!" Mrs. Duncan was too delicate to inquire into Amanda's former situation, but was well convinced it had been very different from her present one. Amanda, however, of her own accord, told her what she had told Mrs. Macpherson, respecting herself. Mrs. Duncan lamented her misfortunes, but since she had met them, blessed the happy chance which conducted her near her habitation.

A month passed in this manner, when one evening, at the usual place of meeting, Mrs. Duncan told her, "that she believed she should soon be quitting that part of the country." Amanda started, and turned pale at this disagreeable intelligence. She had received no answer to her letter from Mrs. Dermot, consequently dreaded that necessity would compel her to remain in her present situation, and on Mrs. Duncan's society she had depended for rendering it bearable to her.

"I have been invited, my dear girl," said Mrs. Duncan, leaning on her arm as they walked up and down the beach, "to reside with an aunt, who has always been kind, and was particularly so to me in my distress. She lives about ten miles from this, at an old place called Dunreath Abbey, of which she is housekeeper. Have you ever heard of it?"—Amanda's agitation, at hearing her mother's native habitation mentioned, is not to be described; her heart palpitated; she felt her colour change, and said, yes, and no, to Mrs. Duncan, without knowing what she answered; then recollecting herself, she replied, "she had heard of it."

"Well then, my dear," continued Mrs. Duncan, "my aunt, as I have already told you, is housekeeper there; she lives in great grandeur, for it is a magnificent old seat, and has the absolute command of every thing, as none of the family have resided at it since the earl of Dunreath's decease."

"My aunt is lately grown weary of the profound solitude in which she lives, and has asked me, in a letter which I received this morning, to go immediately and take up my residence with her, promising, if I do, she will leave every thing she is worth to me and my children, and, as her salary is very good, I know she must have saved a good deal; this is a very tempting offer, and I am only withheld from accepting it directly, by the fear of depriving my children of the advantages of education."

"Why," said Amanda, "what they learn at Mrs. Macpherson's, they could easily learn any where else."

"And I intended, when they were a little older," replied Mrs. Duncan, "to go to some one of the neighbouring towns with them; if I once go to my aunt, I must entirely relinquish such an idea, and to a boarding-school I could not send them, for I have not fortitude to bear separation from them; what I wish therefore is, to procure a person who would be at once a pleasing companion for me, and an eligible governess for them; with such a person, the solitude of Dunreath Abbey would be rather agreeable than irksome to me."

She looked earnestly at Amanda as she spoke, and Amanda's heart began to throb with hope and agitation. "In short, my dear girl," continued she, "you of all others, to be explicit, are the person I would choose to bring along with me; your sweet society would alleviate my sorrows, and your elegant accomplishments give to my children all the advantages I desire them to possess."

"I am not only flattered, but happy by your prepossession in my favour," replied Amanda.

"I am pleased we agree in point of inclination," said Mrs. Duncan; "but I must now inform you that my aunt has always been averse to admit any strangers to the abbey: why, I know not, except it is by the commands of the family, and she tells me in her letter, that if I accept her invitation, I must not on any account let it be known where I am removing to; I dare not, therefore bring you with me without her permission; but I shall write immediately, and request it. In the course of a day or two I may expect an answer; in the meantime, give Mrs. Macpherson no intimation of our present intentions, lest they should be defeated." Amanda promised she would not, and they separated.

She was now in a state of the greatest agitation, at the probability there was that she might visit the seat of her ancestors. She dreaded a disappointment, and felt that, if she went there as the companion of Mrs. Duncan, she should be better situated than a few hours before she had ever expected to be again. Two evenings

after her conversation with Mrs. Duncan, on going to the beach to meet her, she saw her approaching with an open letter in her hand, and a smile on her face, which informed her its contents were pleasing. They were so indeed, as they gave permission to have Amanda brought to the abbey, provided she promised inviolable secrecy as to where she was going. This Amanda cheerfully did, and Mrs. Duncan said, she had some affairs to settle, which would prevent their departure for a few days; at whatever time she appointed, her aunt was to send a carriage for them, and it was agreed, that Mrs. Macpherson should be informed, Mrs. Duncan was leaving that part of the country, and had engaged Amanda as a governess to her children.

Mrs. Duncan then mentioned her own terms. Amanda assured her an idea of them had never entered her thoughts. Mrs. Duncan said she was sure of that, but at the same time thought between the most intimate friends exactness should be preserved. Every thing being settled to their mutual satisfaction, they separated; and the following day, after school broke up, Amanda informed Mrs. Macpherson of her intended departure. The old dame was thunderstruck, and for some time unable to speak, but when she recovered the use of her tongue expressed the utmost rage and indignation against Amanda, Mrs. Duncan, and the prioress; against the first for thinking of leaving her, the second for inveigling her away, and the third for recommending a person who could serve her in such a manner. When she stopped, exhausted by her violence, Amanda took the opportunity of assuring her that she had no reason to condemn any of them, as for her part, previous to Mrs. Duncan's offer, she intended to leave her, being unable to bear a life of such fatigue; that, as her removal would not be immediate, Mrs. Macpherson could suffer no inconvenience by it, there being time enough to look out for another person ere it took place. But the truth now broke from Mrs. Macpherson; angry as she was with Amanda, she could not help confessing, that she never again expected to meet with a person so well qualified to please her, and a

torrent of bitter reproaches again burst forth for her quitting her.

Amanda resented them not, but did all in her power to mollify her; as the most effectual method of doing so, she declared she meant to take no recompense for the time she had been with her, and added, if she had her permission she would write that very evening to Mrs. Dermot about a woman she had seen at the convent, whom she thought well-qualified to be an assistant in her school. This was the woman who had been engaged to attend her to England. Mrs. Macpherson at last consented she should write for her, as her wrath had gradually subsided from the moment Amanda declared she would take no payment.—Amanda accordingly wrote to Mrs. Dermot, and informed her of the agreeable change there was about taking place in her situation; also of Mrs. Macpherson's displeasure, and her own wish that a person might immediately be procured to fill the place she was resigning. She mentioned the woman already spoken of as a proper person, but requested, if she consented to come, she might not be allowed to do so till she had left Mrs. Macpherson's, else who she really was would be betrayed; she now thought little of the tedious and disagreeable days she spent, as the eagerness with which she saw Mrs. Duncan preparing for their departure promised so speedily to change them; she received an answer from Ireland even sooner than she expected. Mrs. Dermot congratulated her on having met so amiable a friend as Mrs. Duncan; said the woman accepted the offer made in Mrs. Macpherson's name; but should not depart till she had written for that purpose, and concluded her letter by saying, there was no intelligence yet of lord Mortimer. Mrs. Macpherson was pleased to find she should not be long without a companion, and two days after the receipt of the letter, Mrs. Duncan told Amanda their journey was fixed for the ensuing day, and begged Amanda to sleep at her house that night, to which she gladly consented; accordingly after dinner she took leave of Mrs. Macpherson, who grumbled out a farewell, and a hope that she might not

have reason to repent quitting her, for the old lady was so incensed to have the place Mrs. Duncan was going to concealed from her, that all her ill humour had returned. Amanda, with a pleasure she could scarcely conceal, quitted her inhospitable mansion, and, attended by a man who carried her trunk, soon found herself at Mrs. Duncan's, where she was received with every demonstration of joy. The evening passed sociably away: they arose early in the morning, and had just breakfasted when the expected carriage from Dunreath abbey arrived; it was a heavy old-fashioned chaise, on whose faded pannels the arms of the Dunreath family were still visible. Mrs. Duncan's luggage had been sent off the preceding day, so that there was nothing now to delay them. Mrs. Duncan made Amanda and the children go into the chaise before her; but, detained by an emotion of the most painful nature, she lingered some time upon the threshold; she could not indeed depart from the habitation where she had past so many happy days with the man of her tenderest affections, without a flood of tears which spoke the bitterness of her feelings. Amanda knew too well the nature of those feelings to attempt restraining them; but the little children, impatient to begin their journey, called out to their mamma to come into the carriage. She started when they spoke, but instantly complied with their desire, and, when they expressed their grief at seeing her cheeks wet with tears, kissed them both, and said she would soon recover her spirits. She accordingly exerted herself for that purpose, and was soon in a condition to converse with Amanda. The day was fine and serene; they travelled leisurely, for the horses had long outlived their mettlesome days, and gave them an opportunity of attentively viewing the prospects on each side, which were various, romantic, and beautiful. The novelty of the scenes, the disagreeable place she had left, and the idea of the one she was going to, helped a little to enliven the pensive soul of Amanda, and she enjoyed a greater degree of tranquillity than she had before experienced since her separation from lord Mortimer.

CHAP. XII.

My listening pow'rs
 Were awed, and every thought in silence hung,
 And wond'ring expectation.

AKENSIDE.

“MY dear, dear Fanny,” said Mrs. Duncan, addressing our heroine by her borrowed name, “if at all inclined to superstition, you are now going to a place which will call it forth. Dunreath Abbey is gothic and gloomy in the extreme, and recalls to one’s mind all the stories they ever heard of haunted houses and apparitions. The desertion of the native inhabitants has hastened the depredations of time, whose ravages are unrepaired, except in the part immediately occupied by the domestics; yet what is the change of the building compared to the revolution which took place in the fortunes of her who once beheld a prospect of being its mistress! The earl of Dunreath’s eldest daughter, as I have often heard from many, was a celebrated beauty, and as good as she was handsome; but a malignant step-mother thwarted her happiness, and forced her to take shelter in the arms of a man who had every thing but fortune to recommend him; but in wanting that he wanted every thing to please her family.

“After some years of distress, she found means to soften the heart of her father; but here the invidious step-mother again interfered, and prevented her experiencing any good effects from his returning tenderness, and, it was rumoured, by a deep and iniquitous scheme, deprived her of her birth-right. Like other rumours, however, it gradually died away, perhaps from lady Malvina and her husband never hearing of it, and none but them had a right to enquire into its truth; but if such a scheme was really contrived, woe be to its fabricator;

the pride and pomp of wealth can neither alleviate or recompense the stings of conscience: much rather," continued Mrs. Duncan, laying her hands on her children's heads, as they sat at her feet, "much rather would I have my babes wander from door to door, to beg the dole of charity, than live upon the birthright of the orphan.

"If lady Dunreath in reality committed the crime she was accused of, she met, in some degree, a punishment for it. Soon after the earl's death she betrayed a partiality for a man every way inferior to her, which partiality, people have not scrupled to say, commenced, and was indulged to a criminal degree, during the life-time of her husband. She would have married him, had not her daughter, the marchioness of Rosline, interfered. Proud and ambitious, her rage at the prospect of such an alliance knew no bounds, and, seconded by the marquis, whose disposition was congenial to her own, they got the unfortunate mother into their power, and hurried her off to a convent in France. I know not whether she is yet living; indeed, I believe there are few who either know or care, she was so much disliked for her haughty disposition. I have sometimes asked my aunt about her, but she would never gratify my curiosity. She has been brought up in the family, and no doubt thinks herself bound to conceal whatever they chuse.

"She lives in ease and plenty, and is absolute mistress of the few domestics that reside in the abbey; but of those domestics I caution you in time, or they will be apt to fill your head with frightful stories of the abbey, which, sometimes, if one's spirits are weak, in spite of reason, will make an impression on the mind. They pretend that the earl of Dunreath's first wife haunts the abbey, venting the most piteous moans, which they ascribe to grief for the unfortunate fate of her daughter, and that daughter's children being deprived of their rightful patrimony.

"I honestly confess, when at the abbey a few years ago, during some distresses of my husband's, I heard strange noises one evening at twilight, as I walked in a

gallery. I told my aunt of them, and she was quite angry at the involuntary terror I expressed, and said it was nothing but the wind whistling through some adjoining galleries which I heard. But this, my dear Fanny," said Mrs. Duncan, who on account of her children had continued the latter part of her discourse in a low voice, "is all between ourselves; for my aunt declared she would never pardon my mentioning my ridiculous fears, or the yet more ridiculous fears of the servants, to any human being."

Amanda listened in silence to Mrs. Duncan's discourse, fearful that if she spoke she should betray the emotions it excited.

They at last entered between the mountains that enclosed the valley on which the abbey stood. The scene was solemn and solitary; every prospect, except one of the sea, seen through an aperture in one of the mountains, was excluded. Some of these mountains were bare, craggy, and projecting; others were skirted with trees, robed with vivid green, and crowned with white and yellow furze; some were all a wood of intermingled shades, and others covered with long and purple heath: various streams flowed from thence into the valley; some stole gently down their sides, in silver rills, giving beauty and vigour wherever they meandered; others tumbled from fragment to fragment, with a noise not undelightful to the ear, and formed for themselves a deep bed in the valley, over which trees that appeared coeval with the building bent their old and leafy heads.

At the foot of what to the rest was called a gently swelling hill, lay the remains of the extensive gardens which had once given the luxuries of the vegetable world to the banquets of the abbey; but the buildings which had nursed those luxuries were all gone to decay, and the gay plantations were overrun with the progeny of neglect and sloth.

The abbey was one of the most venerable-looking buildings Amanda had ever beheld; but it was in melancholy grandeur she now saw it—in the wane of its days, when its glory was passed away, and the whole pile pro-

claimed desertion and decay, she saw it, when, to use the beautiful language of Hutchinson, its pride was brought low, when its magnificence was sinking in the dust, when tribulation had taken the seat of hospitality, and solitude reigned where once the jocund guest had laughed over the sparkling bowl, whilst the owls sung nightly their strains of melancholy to the moonshine that slept upon its mouldering battlements.

The heart of Amanda was full of the fond idea of her parents, and the sigh of tender remembrance stole from it. "How little room," thought she, "should there be in the human heart for the worldly pride which so often dilates it, liable as all things are to change! the distress in which the descendants of noble families are so often seen, the decline of such families themselves, should check that arrogant presumption with which so many look forward to having their greatness and prosperity perpetuated through every branch of their posterity.

"The proud possessors of this abbey, surrounded with affluence, and living in its full enjoyment, never perhaps admitted the idea as at all probable, that one of their descendants should ever approach the seat of her ancestors without that pomp and elegance which heretofore distinguished its daughters. Alas! one now approaches it, neither to display or contemplate the pageantry of wealth, but meek and lowly; not to receive the smile of love or the embrace of relatives, but afflicted and unknown, glad to find a shelter, and procure the bread of dependence beneath its decaying roof.

Mrs. Duncan happily marked not Amanda's emotion as she gazed upon the abbey; she was busily employed in answering her children's questions, who wanted to know whether she thought they would be able to climb up the great big hills they saw.

The carriage at last stopped before the abbey. Mrs. Bruce was already at the door to receive them; she was a little smart old woman, and welcomed her niece and the children with an appearance of the greatest pleasure.

On Amanda's being presented to her, she gazed stedfastly in her face a few minutes, and then exclaimed, "Well, this is very strange—though I know I could never have seen this young lady before, her face is quite familiar to me."

The hall into which they entered was large and gloomy, paved with black marble and supported by pillars, through which the arched doors, that led to various apartments, were seen; rude implements, such as the Caledonians had formerly used in war and hunting, were ranged along the walls. Mrs. Bruce conducted them into a spacious parlour, terminated by an elegant saloon: this she told them had once been the banqueting-room; the furniture, though faded, was still magnificent, and the windows, though still in the gothic style, from being enlarged considerably beyond their original dimensions, afforded a most delightful view of the domain.

"Do you know," said Mrs. Duncan, "this apartment, though one of the pleasantest in the abbey, in point of situation, always makes me melancholy; the moment I enter it I think of the entertainments once given in it, and then its present vacancy and stillness almost instantly reminds me, that those who partook of these entertainments are now almost all humbled with the dust!"—Her aunt laughed, and said, "she was very romantic."

The solemnity of the abbey was well calculated to heighten the awe which stole upon the spirit of Amanda from her first view of it; no noise was heard throughout, except the hoarse creaking of the massy doors, as the servants passed from one room to another, adjusting Mrs. Duncan's things, and preparing for dinner. Mrs. Duncan was drawn into a corner of the room by her aunt, to converse, in a low voice, about family affairs, and the children were rambling about the hall, wondering and enquiring about every thing they saw.

Thus left to herself, a soft languor gradually stole over the mind of Amanda, which was almost exhausted from the emotions it had experienced. The murmuring sound of water-falls and the buzzing of the flies,

that basked in the sunny rays which darted through the casements, lulled her into a kind of pensive tranquillity.

"Am I really," she asked herself, "in the seat of my ancestors? Am I really in the habitation where my mother was born, where her irrevocable vows were plighted to my father? I am—and, oh! within it may I at last find an asylum from the vices and dangers of the world; within it may my sorrowing spirit lose its agitation, and subdue, if not its affections, at least its murmurs, at the disappointment of those affections."

The appearance of dinner interrupted her. She made exertions to overcome any appearance of dejection, and the conversation, if not lively, was at least cheerful. After dinner Mrs. Duncan, who had been informed by Amanda of her predilection for old buildings, asked her aunt's permission to show her the Abbey. Mrs. Bruce immediately arose, and said she would have that pleasure herself. She accordingly led the way; many of the apartments yet displayed the sumptuous taste of those who had furnished them. "It is astonishing to me," said Mrs. Duncan, "that so magnificent a pile as this should be abandoned, as I may say, by its possessors."

"The marquis of Rosline's Castle is a more modern structure than this," said Mrs. Bruce, "and preferred by them on that account."

"So, like the family monument," rejoined Mrs. Duncan, "they are merely satisfied with permitting this to stand, as it may help to transmit the marchioness's name to posterity."

"How far does the marquis live from this?" asked Amanda.

"About twelve miles," replied Mrs. Bruce, who did not appear pleased with her niece's conversation, and led the way to a long gallery, ornamented with portraits of the family. This gallery Amanda knew well by description; this was the gallery in which her father had stopped to contemplate the picture of her mother, and her heart throbbed with impatience and anxiety to see that picture.

Mrs. Bruce, as she went before her, told her the

names of the different portraits. She suddenly stopped before one;—"that," cried she, "is the marchioness of Rosline's, drawn for her when lady Augusta Dunreath." Amanda cast her eyes upon it, and perceived in the countenance the same haughtiness as still distinguished the marchioness. She looked at the next panel, and found it empty.

"The picture of lady Malvina Dunreath hung there," said Mrs. Bruce; "but after her unfortunate marriage it was taken down."

"And destroyed," exclaimed Amanda mournfully.

"No; but it was thrown into the old chapel, where with the rest of the lumber (the soul of Amanda was struck at these words)—it has been locked up for years."

"And is it impossible to see it?" asked Amanda.

"Impossible indeed," replied Mrs. Bruce, "the chapel and the whole eastern part of the Abbey, have long been in a ruinous situation, on which account it has been locked up."

"This is the gallery," whispered Mrs. Duncan, "in which I heard the strange noises; but not a word of them to my aunt."

Amanda could scarcely conceal the disappointment she felt at finding she could not see her mother's picture. She would have entreated the chapel might be opened for that purpose, had she not feared exciting suspicions by doing so.

They returned from the gallery to the parlour, and in the course of conversation Amanda heard many interesting anecdotes of her ancestors from Mrs. Bruce. Her mother was also mentioned, and Mrs. Bruce, by dwelling on her worth, made amends, in some degree, to Amanda for having called her picture lumber. She retired to her chamber with her mind softened and elevated by hearing of her mother's virtues. She called upon her, upon her father's spirit, upon them whose kindred souls were re-united in heaven, to bless their child, to strengthen, to support her in the thorny path marked out for her to take; nor to cease their tutelary care till she was joined to them by Providence.

CHAP. XIII.

Such on the ground the fading rose we see,
By some rude blast torn from the parent tree :
The daffodil so leans his languid head,
Newly mown down upon his grassy bed.

BLEE.

EXPERIENCE convinced Amanda, that the change in her situation was, if possible, more pleasing than she expected it would be. Mrs. Duncan was the kindest and most attentive of friends. Mrs. Bruce was civil and obliging, and her little pupils were docile and affectionate. Could she have avoided retrospection she would have been happy ; but the remembrance of past events, was too deeply impressed upon her mind to be erased ; it mingled in the visions of the night, in the avocations of the day, and in the meditations of her lonely hours, forcing from her heart the sighs of regret and tenderness ; her mornings were devoted to her pupils, and in the evenings she sometimes walked with Mrs. Duncan, sometimes read aloud whilst she and her aunt were working ; but whenever they were engaged in chatting about family affairs, or at a game of piquet (which was often the case, as Mrs. Bruce neither loved walking nor working), she always took that opportunity of retiring from the room, and either rambled through the dark and intricate windings of the Abbey, or about the grounds contiguous to it ; she sighed whenever she passed the chapel which contained the picture of her mother ; it was in a ruinous condition ; but a thick foliage of ivy partly hid, while it proclaimed its decay ; the windows were broken in many places, but all too high to admit the possibility of her gaining admittance through them, and the door was strongly secured by massy bars of iron, as was every door which had a communication with the eastern part of the Abbey. A fort-

night passed away at the Abbey without any thing happening to disturb the tranquillity which reigned in it. No one approached it, except a few of the wandering children of poverty, and its inhabitants seemed perfectly content with their seclusion from the world. Amanda, by Mrs. Duncan's desire, had told Mrs. Dermot to direct her letters to a town about five miles from the Abbey; thither a man went every day, but constantly returned without one for her.

"Why," she asked herself, "this anxiety for a letter, this disappointment for not receiving one, when I neither expect to hear any thing interesting or agreeable? Mrs. Dermot has already said she had no means of hearing about lord Mortimer, and even if she had, why should I desire such intelligence, torn as I am from him for ever?"

At the expiration of another week an incident happened, which again destroyed the composure of our heroine. Mrs. Bruce one morning hastily entered the room, where she and Mrs. Duncan were sitting with the little girls, and begged they would not stir from it till she told them to do so, as the marquis of Rosline's steward was below stairs, and if he knew of their residence at the Abbey, she was confident he would reveal it to his lord, which she had no doubt would occasion her own dismissal from it. The ladies assured her they would not leave the apartment, and she retired, leaving them astonished at the agitation she betrayed.

In about two hours she returned, and said she came to release them from confinement, as the steward had departed. "He had brought unexpected intelligence," said she; "the marquis and his family are coming down to the castle; the season is so far advanced I did not suppose they would visit it till next summer: I must therefore," continued she, addressing her niece, "send to the neighbouring town to procure lodgings for you till the family leave the country, as no doubt some of them will come to the Abbey, and to find you in it would, I can assure you, be attended with unpleasant consequences to me."

Mrs. Duncan begged she would not suffer the least uneasiness on her account, and proposed that very day leaving the Abbey.

"No," Mrs. Bruce replied, "there was no necessity for quitting it for a few days longer; the family," continued she, "are coming down upon a joyful occasion, to celebrate the nuptials of the marquis's daughter, lady Euphrasia Sutherland."

"Lady Euphrasia's nuptials!" exclaimed Amanda, in an agitated voice, and forgetting her own situation, "to whom is she going to be married?"

"To lord Mortimer," Mrs. Bruce replied, "the earl of Cherbury's only son, a very fine young man. I am told the affair has been long talked of; but ——." Here she was interrupted by a deep sigh, or rather a groan from the unfortunate Amanda, who at the same moment fell back on her chair, pale, and without motion. Mrs. Duncan screamed, and flew to her assistance. Mrs. Bruce, equally frightened, though less affected, ran for restoratives, and the children clasped her knees and wept. From her pensive look and manner Mrs. Duncan suspected, from their first acquaintance, that her heart had experienced a disappointment of the tenderest nature. Her little girls too had told her that they had seen miss Donald crying over a picture. Her suspicions concerning such a disappointment were now confirmed by the sudden emotion and illness of Amanda; but she had all the delicacy which belongs to true sensibility, and determined never to let Amanda know she conjectured the source of her sorrows, certain as she was that they had never originated from any misconduct.

Mrs. Bruce's drops restored Amanda's senses; but she felt weak and trembling, and begged she might be supported to her room to lie down on the bed. Mrs. Bruce and Mrs. Duncan accordingly led her to it. The former almost immediately retired, and the tears of Amanda now burst forth. She wept a long time without intermission, and as soon as her sobs would permit her to speak, begged Mrs. Duncan to leave her to herself. Mrs. Duncan knew too well the luxury of secret

grief to deny her the enjoyment of so melancholy a feast, and directly withdrew.

The wretched Amanda then asked herself, if she had not known before, that the sacrifice she had made lord Cherbury would lead to the event she now regretted? It was true she did know it; but whenever an idea of its taking place occurred, she had so sedulously driven it from her mind, that she at last almost ceased to think about it; was he to be united to any other woman than lady Euphrasia, she thought she would not be so wretched. "Oh, Mortimer! beloved of my soul!" she cried, "were you going to be united to a woman sensible of your worth, and worthy your noble heart, in the knowledge of your happiness my misery would be lessened; but what a union of misery must minds so uncongenial as your's and lady Euphrasia's form! Alas! am I not wretched enough in contemplating my own prospect of unhappiness, but that your's also must be obtruded on me?"

"Yet, perhaps," she continued, "the evils I dread on lord Mortimer's account may be averted. Oh! that they may," said she, with fervour, and raising her hands and eyes, "soften, gracious Heaven! soften the flinty nature of lady Euphrasia! Oh! render her sensible of the blessings you bestow, in giving her lord Mortimer, and render her not only capable of inspiring, but of feeling tenderness! May she prove to him the tender friend, the faithful, the affectionate companion, the unfortunate Amanda would have been! Oh! may she build her happiness on his, and may his be great as his virtues, extensive as his charities, and may the knowledge of it soothe my afflicted heart!"

Her spirits were a little elevated by the fervency of her language; but it was a transient elevation; the flush it spread over her cheeks soon died away, and her tears again began to flow.

"Alas!" she cried, "in a few days it will be criminal to think of lord Mortimer as I have hitherto done, and I shall blush," continued she, gazing at his picture,

“to contemplate this dear shadow, when I reflect its original is the husband of lady Euphrasia.”

The dinner-bell now sounded through the abbey, and almost at the same time she heard a tap at her door. She started, and reflected for the first time, that her deep dejection would naturally excite suspicions as to its source, if longer indulged. Shocked at the idea of incurring them, she hastily wiped away her tears, and opening the door, found her friend Mrs. Duncan at it, who begged she would come down to dinner. Amanda did not refuse, but was obliged to use the supporting arm of her friend to reach the parlour. She could not eat; with difficulty could she restrain her tears, or answer the inquiries Mrs. Bruce made after what she supposed a mere bodily indisposition. She forced herself, however, to continue in the parlour till after tea, when cards being produced, she had an opportunity of going out and indulging her anguish without fear of interruption: unable, however, to walk far, she repaired to the old chapel, and sitting down by it, leaned her head against its decayed and ivy-covered walls. She had scarcely sat in this manner a minute, when the stones gave way, with a noise that terrified her, and she would have fallen backwards, had she not caught at some projecting wood. She hastily rose, and found that the ivy entirely concealed the breach. She examined it, however, and perceived it large enough to admit her into the chapel. A sudden pleasure pervaded her heart at the idea of being able to enter it, and examine the picture she had so long wished to behold. There was nothing to oppose her entrance but the ivy. This she parted with difficulty, but so as not to strip it from the wall, and after stepping over the fallen rubbish, she found herself in the body of the chapel. The silent hour of twilight was now advanced, but the moon-beams that darted through the broken roof prevented the chapel from being involved in utter darkness. Already had the owls begun their melancholy strains on its mouldering pillars, while the ravens croaked amongst the luxuriant trees that rustled around it; dusty and moth-eaten banners were suspended from the walls, and rusty casques, shields, and spears were pro-

miscuously heaped together, the useless armour of those, over whose remains Amanda now trod with a light and trembling foot. She looked for the picture, and perceived one reclined against the wall near the altar. She wiped away the dust, and perceived this was indeed the one she sought, the one her father had so often described to her. The light was too imperfect for her to distinguish the features, and she resolved, if possible, to come at an earlier hour the ensuing evening. She felt impressed with reverential awe as she stood before it. She recollected the pathetic manner in which her father had mentioned his emotions as he gazed upon it, and her tears began to flow for the disastrous fate of her parents and her own. She sunk into an agony of grief, which mournful remembrances and present calamities excited, upon the steps of that altar, where Fitzalan and Malvina had plighted their irrevocable vows; she leaned her arm on the rails, but her face was turned to the picture, as if it could see and would pity her distress. She remained in this situation till the striking of the abbey clock warned her to depart. In going towards the entrance she perceived a small arched door at the opposite side. As the apartments lady Malvina had occupied were in this part of the building, she resolved on visiting them before she left the abbey, lest the breach in the wall should be discovered ere she returned to it. She returned to the parlour ere the ladies had finished their game of piquet, and the next evening, immediately after tea, repaired to the chapel, leaving them as usual engaged at cards. She stood a few minutes before it to see if any one was near; but perceiving no object she again entered it. She had now sufficient light to examine the picture: though faded by the damp, it yet retained that loveliness for which its original was so much admired, and which Amanda had so often heard eloquently described by her father. She contemplated it with awe and pity. Her heart swelled with the emotions it excited, and gave way to its feelings in tears. To weep before the shade of her mother, seemed to assuage the bitterness of those feelings. She pronounced the name of her parents, she called herself

their wretched orphan, a stranger, and a dependant, in the mansion of her ancestors. She pronounced the name of lord Mortimer in the impassioned accents of tenderness and distress. As she thus indulged the sorrows of her soul in tears and lamentations, she suddenly heard a faint noise like an advancing footstep near her. She started up, for she had been kneeling before her mother's picture, terrified lest her visit to the chapel had been discovered, which she knew, if the case, would mortally disoblige Mrs. Bruce, though why she should be so averse to any one's visiting it she could not conceive. She listened in trembling anxiety a few minutes; all again was still, and she returned to the parlour, where she found the ladies as she had left them, determined, notwithstanding her late fright, to return the next evening to the chapel, and visit the apartments that were her mother's.

CHAP. XIV.

What beck'ning ghost along the moonlight shade
Invites my steps?

POPE.

THE next evening Amanda's patience was put to the test; for after tea Mrs. Duncan proposed a walk, which seemed to cut off her hopes of visiting the chapel that evening; but after strolling some time about the valley, complaisance for her aunt made Mrs. Duncan return to the parlour, where she was expected to take her usual hand at piquet. The hour was late, and the sky so gloomy, that the moon, though at its full, could scarcely penetrate

the darkness; notwithstanding all this, Amanda resolved on going to the chapel, considering this as, in all probability, the only opportunity she would have of visiting the apartments her mother had occupied (which she had an inexpressible desire to enter), as in two days she was to accompany Mrs. Duncan to lodgings in the neighbouring town: she accordingly said she had a mind to walk a little longer. Mrs. Bruce bid her beware of catching cold, and Mrs. Duncan said she was too fond of solitary rambles; but no opposition being made to her intention, she hurried to the chapel, and entering the little arched door, found herself in a lofty hall, in the centre of which was a grand staircase, the whole enlightened by a large Gothic window at the head of the stairs. She ascended them with a trepidation, for her footsteps produced a hollow echo, which added something awful to the gloom that enveloped her. On gaining the top of the stairs, she saw two large folding doors on either side, both closed. She knew the direction to take, and, by a small exertion of strength, pulled the one on the left side open, and perceived a long gallery, which she knew was terminated by the apartments she wanted to visit. Its almost total darkness, however, nearly conquered her wish, and shook her resolution of proceeding; but ashamed, even to herself, to give way to superstitious fears, or turn back without gratifying her inclination after going so far, she advanced into the gallery, though with a trembling step, and as she let the door out of her hand, it shut to, with a violence that shook the whole building. The gallery on one side had a row of arched doors, and on the other an equal number of windows; but so small, and placed so high, as scarcely to admit a ray of light. Amanda's heart began to beat with unusual quickness, and she thought she should never reach the end of the gallery. She at last came to a door; it was closed, not fastened; she pushed it gently open, and could just discern a spacious room; this she supposed had been her mother's dressing-room; the moon-beams, as if to aid her wish of examining it, suddenly darted through the casements. Cheered by the unexpected light, she advanced into the room; at

the upper end of it something in white attracted her notice ; she concluded it to be the portrait of lady Malvina's mother, which she had been informed hung in this room. She went up to examine it ; but her horror may be better conceived than described, when she found herself not by a picture, but by the real form of a woman, with a death-like countenance ! She screamed wildly at the terrifying spectre (for such she believed it to be), and as quick as lightning flew from the room. Again was the moon obscured by a cloud, and she involved in utter darkness. She ran with such violence, that as she reached the door at the end of the gallery, she fell against it. Extremely hurt, she had not power to move for a few minutes, but while she involuntarily paused, she heard approaching footsteps. Wild with terror, she instantly recovered her faculties, and attempted opening it, but it resisted all her efforts. "Protect me, Heaven!" she exclaimed, and at the moment felt an icy hand upon her's! Her senses instantly receded, and she sunk to the floor. When she recovered from her insensibility, she perceived a glimmering light around her. She opened her eyes with fearfulness, but no object appeared, and to her great joy she saw the door standing open, and found that the light proceeded from a large window. She instantly rose, and descended the stair-case with as much haste as her trembling limbs could make ; but again what was her horror when, on entering the chapel, the first object she beheld was the same that had already alarmed her so much ! She made a spring to escape through the entrance, but the apparition, with a rapidity equal to her own, glided before her, and with a hollow voice, as she waved her emaciated hand, exclaimed, "Forbear to go."

A deadly faintness again came over Amanda ; she sunk upon a broken seat, and put her hand over her eyes to shut out the frightful vision.

"Lose," continued the figure, in a hollow voice, "lose your superstitious fears, and in me behold not an airy inhabitant of the other world, but a sinful, sorrowing, and repentant woman."

The terrors of Amanda gave way to this unexpected address ; but her surprise was equal to what these terrors had been ; she withdrew her hand, and gazed attentively on the form before her.

“ If my eye, if my ear deceives me not,” it continued, “ you are a descendant of the Dunreath family. I heard you last night, when you imagined no being near, call yourself the unfortunate orphan of lady Malvina Fitzalan.”

“ I am, indeed, her child,” replied Amanda. “ Tell me then by what means you have been brought hither ; you called yourself a stranger, and a dependant in the house of your ancestors.”

“ I am both,” said Amanda : “ my real name is concealed, from circumstances peculiarly distressing, and I have been brought to the abbey as an instructress to two children related to the person who takes care of it.”

“ My prayers at length,” exclaimed the ghastly figure, raising her hollow eyes and emaciated hands, “ my prayers have reached the throne of Mercy, and, as a proof that my repentance is accepted, power is given me to make reparation for the injuries I have committed.

“ Oh ! thou,” she cried, turning to Amanda, “ whose form revives in my remembrance, the youth and beauty blasted by my means, if thy mind, as well as face, resembles lady Malvina’s, thou wilt, in pity to my sufferings, forbear to reproach my crimes. In me,” she continued, “ you behold the guilty, but contrite, widow of the earl of Dunreath.”

Amanda started. “ Oh, gracious Heaven !” she exclaimed, “ can this be possible ?”

“ Have you not been taught to execrate my name ?” asked the unhappy woman.

“ Oh ! no,” replied Amanda.

“ No,” replied lady Dunreath, “ because your mother was an angel. But did she not leave a son ?”

“ Yes,” said Amanda.—“ And does he live ?”

“ Alas ! I do not know,” replied Amanda, melting into tears ; “ distress separated us, and he is not more ignorant of my destiny than I am of his.”

“It is I,” exclaimed lady Dunreath, “have been the cause of this distress; it is I, sweet and sainted Malvina, have been the cause of calamity to your children: but blessed be the wonder-working hand of Providence,” she continued, “which has given me an opportunity of making some amends for my cruelty and injustice: but,” she proceeded, “as I know the chance which led you to the chapel, I dread to detain you longer, lest it should lead to a discovery. Was it known that you saw me, all my intentions would be defeated. Be secret, then, I conjure you, more on your account than on my own, and let not Mrs. Bruce have the smallest intimation of what has passed: but return to-morrow night, and you shall receive from me a sacred deposit, which will, if affluence can do it, render you completely happy. In the mean time, do you throw upon paper a brief account of your life, that I may know the incidents which so providentially brought you to the abbey.” Amanda promised to obey her in every respect, and the unfortunate woman, unable longer to speak, kissed her hand, and retired through the little arched door. Amanda left the chapel, and, full of wonder, pity, and expectation, moved mechanically to the parlour. Mrs. Bruce and Mrs. Duncan had just risen from cards, and both were instantly struck with her pallid and disordered looks. They inquired if she was ill: their inquiries roused her from a deep reverie. She recollected the danger of exciting suspicions, and replied, “she was only fatigued with walking, and begged leave to retire to her chamber.” Mrs. Duncan attended her to it, and would have sat with her till she saw her in bed, had Amanda allowed; but it was not her intention, indeed, to go to bed, for some time. When left to herself, the surprising and interesting discovery she had made had so agitated her, that she could scarcely compose herself enough to take up a pen to narrate the particulars of her life, as lady Dunreath had requested. She sketched them in a brief, yet hasty manner, sufficiently strong, however, to interest the feelings of a sympathetic heart: the tender and peculiar sorrows of her own she omitted; her life was represented sufficiently calamitous, without

mentioning the incurable sorrow which disappointed love had entailed upon it. She was glad she had executed her task with haste, as Mrs. Duncan called upon her in the course of the next day, to assist in packing for their removal to the neighbouring town. The evening was far advanced ere she had an opportunity of repairing to the chapel, where she found the unfortunate lady Dunreath resting, in an attitude of deep despondence, against the rails of the altar.

Her pale and woe-worn countenance, her emaciated form, her solitary situation, all inspired Amanda with the tenderest compassion, and she dropped a tear upon the cold and withered hand which was extended to her's as she approached. "I merit not the tear of pity," said the unhappy woman; "yet it casts a gleam of comfort on my heart to meet with a being who feels for its sorrows: but the moments are precious." She then led Amanda to the altar, and stooping down, desired her assistance in removing a small marble flag beneath it. This being effected with difficulty, Amanda perceived an iron box, which she also assisted in raising. Lady Dunreath then took a key from her bosom, with which she opened it, and took from thence a sealed paper. "Receive," said she, presenting it to Amanda, "receive the will of your grandfather, a sacred deposit, entrusted to your care for your brother, the rightful heir of the earl of Dunreath! Oh! may its restoration, and my sincere repentance, atone for its long detention and concealment! oh! may the fortune it will bestow upon you as well as your brother, be productive to both of the purest happiness!"

Trembling with joyful surprise, Amanda received the paper. "Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed she, "is it possible? Do I really hold the will of my grandfather—a will which will entitle my brother to affluence? Oh! Providence, how mysterious are thy ways! Oh! Oscar, beloved of my heart," she continued, forgetting at that moment every consideration of self, "could thy sister have possibly foreseen her sorrows would have led to such a discovery, half their bitterness would have been allayed. Yes, my father, one of thy children may at least be happy, and, in

witnessing that happiness, the other will find a mitigation of misery." Tears burst from her as she spoke, and relieved the strong emotions that swelled her heart, almost to bursting.

"Oh! talk not of your misery," said lady Dunreath, with a convulsive sigh, "lest you drive me to despair. For ever must I accuse myself of being the real source of calamity to lady Malvina and her children."

"Excuse me," cried Amanda, wiping her eyes; "I should be ungrateful to Heaven and to you if I dwelt upon my sorrows; but let me not neglect this opportunity," she continued, "of inquiring if there is any way in which I can possibly serve you. Is there no friend to whom I could apply in your name, to have you released from this cruel and unjustifiable confinement?"

"No," said lady Dunreath, "no such friend exists; when I had the power to do so, I never conciliated friendship, and if I am still remembered in the world, it is only with contempt and abhorrence. The laws of my country would certainly liberate me at once; but if things turn out as I expect, there will be no occasion for an application to them, and any step of that kind at present might be attended with the most unpleasant consequences. Your future prosperity, my present safety, all depend on secrecy for a short period. In this paper, drawing one from her pocket, and presenting it to Amanda, "I have explained my reason for desiring such secrecy." Amanda put it with the will into her bosom, and gave in return the little narrative she had sketched. They both assisted in replacing the box and flag, and then seated themselves on the steps of the altar. Amanda informed lady Dunreath of her intended departure the next day from the abbey, and the occasion of it. Lady Dunreath expressed the utmost impatience to have every thing put into a proper train for the avowal of the will, declaring that the sight of the rightful heir in possession of the abbey, would calm the agitations of a spirit which, she believed, would soon forsake its earthly habitation. Tears of compassion fell from Amanda at these words; and she shuddered to

think that the unfortunate woman might die abandoned, and bereft of comfort; again she urged her to think of some expedient for procuring immediate liberty, and again lady Dunreath assured her it was impossible.

Absorbed in a kind of sympathetic melancholy, they forgot the danger of delay, till the abbey clock chiming half an hour past ten, which was later than Mrs. Bruce's usual hour of supper, startled and alarmed them both. "Go, go," cried lady Dunreath, with wild expression of fear, "go, or we are undone!" Amanda pressed her hand in silence, and trembling departed from the chapel. She stopped at the outside to listen, for by her ear alone could she now receive any intimation of danger, as the night was too dark to permit any object to be discerned; but the breeze sighing amongst the trees of the valley, and the melancholy murmur of waterfalls, were the only sounds she heard. She groped along the wall of the chapel to keep in the path, which wound from it to the entrance of the abbey, and in doing so passed her hand over the cold face of a human being; terrified, an involuntary scream burst from her, and she faintly articulated, "Defend me, Heaven!" In the next moment she was seized round the waist, and her senses were receding, when Mrs. Duncan's voice recalled them. She apologized to Amanda for giving her such a fright; but said, that her uneasiness was so great at her long absence that, attended by a servant, she had come in quest of her.

Mrs. Duncan's voice relieved Amanda from the horror of thinking she had met with a person who would insult her; but it had given rise to a new alarm. She feared she had been traced to the chapel, that her discourse with lady Dunreath had been overheard, and of course the secret of the will discovered, and that Mrs. Duncan, amiable as she was, might sacrifice friendship to interest and consanguinity. This idea overwhelmed her with anguish; her deep and heavy sighs, her violent trembling, alarmed Mrs. Duncan, who hastily called the servant to assist her in supporting Amanda home; drops were then administered, but they would have wanted their usual efficacy with

the poor night-wanderer, had she not soon been convinced by Mrs. Duncan's manner she had not made the dreaded discovery.

Amanda would have retired to her chamber before supper, but that she feared distressing Mrs. Duncan by doing so, who would have imputed her indisposition to her fright. She accordingly remained in the parlour, but with a mind so occupied by the interesting events of the evening, that she soon forgot the purpose for which she sat down to table, and neither heeded what was doing or saying. From this reverie she was suddenly roused by the sound of a name for ever dear and precious, which in a moment had power to recal her wandering ideas. She raised her eyes, and with a sad intentness fixed them on Mrs. Bruce, who continued to talk of the approaching nuptials of lord Mortimer. Tears now fell from Amanda in spite of her efforts to restrain them, and, while dropping her head to wipe them away, she caught the eyes of Mrs. Duncan fastened on her with an expression of mingled pity and curiosity. A deep crimson suffused the face of Amanda at the consciousness of having betrayed the secret of her heart; but her confusion was inferior to her grief, and the rich suffusion of the one soon gave place to the deadly hue of the other. "Ah!" thought she, "what is now the acquisition of wealth when happiness is beyond my reach?" Yet scarcely had she conceived the thought ere she wished it buried in oblivion. "Is the comfort of independence, the power of dispensing happiness to others, nothing?" she asked herself. "Do they not merit gratitude of the most pure thankfulness, of the most fervent nature, to Providence? They do," she cried, and paid them at the moment in the silent tribute of her heart.

It was late ere the ladies separated for the night, and as soon as Amanda had secured the door of her chamber, she drew from her bosom the papers so carefully deposited in them, and sat down to peruse the narrative of lady Dunreath.

CHAP. XV.

For true Repentance never comes too late:
 As soon as born she makes herself a shroud,
 The weeping mantle of a fleecy cloud,
 And swift as thought her airy journey takes;
 Her hand heaven's azure gate with trembling strikes;
 The stars do with amazement on her look;
 She tells her story in so sad a tone,
 That angels start from bliss, and give a groan.

LEE.

ADORING the Power who has given me means of making restitution for my injustice, I take up my pen to disclose to your view, oh! lovely orphan of the injured Malvina, the frailties of a heart which has long been tortured with the retrospect of past and the pressure of present evil; convinced, as I have already said, that if your mind as well as form resembles your mother's, you will, while you condemn the sinner, commiserate the penitent, and touched by that penitence, offer up a prayer to Heaven (and the prayers of innocence are ever availing) for its forgiveness unto me. Many years are now elapsed since the commencement of my confinement, years which diminished my hope of being able to make reparation for the injustice and cruelty I had done lady Malvina Fitzalan, but left unabated my desire of doing so.

Ah, sweet Malvina! from thy soft voice I was doomed never to hear my pardon pronounced; but from thy child I may, perhaps, have it accorded; if so, from that blissful abode, where thou now enjoyest felicity, if the departed souls of the happy are allowed to view the transactions of the world, thine, I am convinced, will behold with benignancy and compassion, the wretch

who covers herself with shame to atone for her injuries to thee.

But I must restrain these effusions of my heart, lest I encroach too much upon the limited time allotted to make what I may call my confession, and inform you of particulars necessary to be known.

My cruelty and insolence to lady Malvina you no doubt already know, in my conduct to her. I forgot the obligations her mother had conferred upon me, whose patronage and kind protection laid the foundation of my prosperity. I rejoiced at her marriage with captain Fitzalan, as a step that would deprive her of her father's favour, and place her in that state of poverty which would conceal charms I detested for being superior to my daughter's.—The earl's resentment was violent at first; but with equal surprise and concern I soon perceived it gradually subsiding; the irrevocableness of the deed, the knowledge that he wanted no acquisition of fortune; above all, Fitzalan's noble descent, and the graces and virtues he possessed, worthy of the highest station, dwelt upon the earl's imagination, and pleaded strongly in extenuation of his daughter; alarmed lest my schemes against her should be rendered abortive, like an evil spirit I contrived to rekindle, by means of my agents, the earl's resentment; they presented the flagrant, the daring contempt lady Malvina had shown to paternal authority, and that too easy a forgiveness to it might influence her sister to similar conduct, with a person perhaps less worthy, and more needy, if possible, than Fitzalan. This last suggestion had the desired effect, and lady Malvina, he declared, in future should be considered as alien to his family.

I now hoped my ambitious views, relative to my daughter would be accomplished. I had long wished her united to the marquis of Rosline; but he had for years been lady Malvina's admirer, and was so much attached to her, that on her marriage he went abroad. My arts were then tried to prevail on the earl to make a will in lady Augusta's favour; but this was a point

I could not accomplish, and I lived in continual apprehension, lest his dying intestate should give lady Malvina the fortune I wished to deprive her of. Anxious, however, to procure a splendid establishment for my daughter, I every where said there was no doubt but she would be sole heiress to the earl. At the expiration of three years the marquis returned to his native country; his unfortunate passion was subdued, he heard and believed the reports I circulated, and stimulated by avarice, his leading propensity, offered his hand to my daughter and was accepted. The earl gave her a large portion in ready money; but, notwithstanding all my endeavours, would not make a settlement of any of his estates upon her: I however still hoped, and the marquis, from what I said, believed, that she would possess all his fortune.— My daughter's nuptials added to my natural haughtiness; they also increased my love of pleasure, by affording me more amply the means of gratifying it at the sumptuous entertainments at the marquis's castle; engaged continually in them, the earl, whose infirmities confined him to the abbey, was left to solitude, and the care of his domestics. My neglect, you will say, was impolitic, whilst I had any point to carry with him; but Providence has wisely ordained it, that vice should still defeat itself. Had I always acted in uniformity with the tenderness I once showed the earl, I have little doubt but that at last I should have prevailed on him to act as I pleased; but infatuated by pleasure, my prudence, no, it deserves not such an appellation, forsook me: though the earl's body was a prey to the infirmities of age, his mind knew none of its imbecilities, and he sensibly felt, and secretly resented my neglect; the more he reflected on it, the more he contrasted it with the attention he was accustomed to receive from his banished Malvina, and the resentment I had hitherto kept alive in his mind against her gradually subsided, so that he was well prepared to give a favourable reception to the little innocent advocate she sent to plead her cause. My terror, my dismay, when I surprised the little Oscar at the knee of his grandfather, are

not to be described. The tears, which the agitated parent shed upon the infant's lovely cheek seemed to express affection for its mother, and regrets for his rigour to her; yet amidst these tears I thought I perceived an exulting joy as he gazed upon the child, which seemed to say, "thou wilt yet be the pride, the prop, the ornament of my ancient house." After circumstances proved I was right in my interpretation of his looks, I drove the little Oscar from the room with frantic rage. The earl was extremely affected. He knew the violence of my temper, and felt too weak to enter into any altercation with me; he therefore reserved his little remaining strength and spirits to arrange his affairs, and by passiveness seemed yielding to my sway; but I soon found, though silent, he was resolute. My preventing your brother from again gaining access to his grandfather, and my repulsing your mother when she requested an interview with the earl, I suppose you already know. Gracious Heaven! my heart sickens, even at this remote period, when I reflect on the night I turned her from her paternal home, from that mansion, under whose roof her benevolent mother had sheltered my tender years from the rude storms of adverse life. Oh! black and base ingratitude, dire return for the benefits I had received; yet almost at the very instant I committed so cruel an action, she was avenged. No language can describe my horrors as conscience represented to me the barbarity of my conduct. I trembled with involuntary fears; sounds had power to terrify; every blast which shook the abbey (and dreadful was the tempest of that night) made me shrink, as if about to meet with an instantaneous punishment.

I trembled at my undivulged crimes
 Unwhipt of justice.—

I knew the earl expected either to see or hear from your mother; he was ignorant of the reception she had met from me, and I was determined, if possible, he should continue so. As soon as certified of lady Malvina's departure from the neighbourhood of the abbey, I contrived a letter, in captain Fitzalan's name

to the earl, filled with the most cutting and insolent reproaches to him for his conduct to his daughter, and imputing her precipitate departure from Scotland to it. These unjust reproaches I trusted would irritate the earl and work another revolution in his mind; but I was disappointed; he either believed the letter a forgery, or else resolved the children should not suffer for the fault of the parent; he accordingly sent for his agent, an eminent lawyer in one of the neighbouring towns. This man was lately deceased, but his son, bred to his profession, obeyed the summons from the abbey. I dreaded his coming, but scarcely had I seen him ere this dread was lost in emotions till then unknown; a soft, a tender, an ardent passion took possession of my heart, on beholding a man, in the very prime of life, adorned with every natural and acquired grace that could please the eye and ear; married at an early period, possessed of all the advantages of art, said and believing myself to be handsome, I flattered myself I might on his heart make an impression equal to that he had done on mine; if so, I thought how easily could the earl's intentions, in favour of his daughter, be defeated, for that love will readily make sacrifices I had often heard. A will was made, but my new ideas and schemes divested me of uneasiness about it. Melross continued at the abbey much longer than he need have done, and when he left it his absence was of short continuance. The earl's business was his pretext for his long and frequent visits; but the real motive of them he soon discovered to me, encouraged no doubt by the partiality I betrayed. I shall not dwell on this part of my story; but I completed my crime by violating my conjugal fidelity, and we engaged to be united whenever I was at liberty, which, from the infirm state of the earl, I now believed would shortly be the case. In consequence of this, Melross agreed to put into my hands the earl's will, which had been entrusted to his care, and he acknowledged drawn up entirely in favour of lady Malvina Fitzalan and her offspring. It was witnessed by friends of his, whom he had no doubt of bribing to silence. You may wonder

that the will was not destroyed as soon as I had it in my possession; but to do so never was my intention; by keeping it in my hands, I trusted I should have a power over my daughter, which duty and affection had never yet given me. Violent and imperious in her disposition, I doubted not but she and the marquis, who nearly resembled her in these particulars, would endeavour to prevent, from pride and selfishness, my union with Melross; but to know they were in my power would crush all opposition I supposed, and obtain their most flattering notice for him—a notice, from my pride, I found essential to my tranquillity. The earl requested Melross to enquire about lady Malvina, which he promised to do; but it is almost unnecessary to say, never fulfilled such a promise. In about a year after the commencement of my attachment for Melross he expired, and the marchioness inherited his possessions by means of a forged will executed by Melross; ignorant indeed at the time that it was by iniquity she obtained them, though her conduct since that period has proved she would not have suffered any compunction from such a knowledge. I removed from the abbey to an estate about fifteen miles from it, which the earl had left me, and here, much sooner than decency would have warranted, avowed my intention of marrying Melross to the marquis and marchioness of Rosline. The consequences of this avowal were pretty much what I had expected. The marquis, more by looks than words, expressed his contempt; but the marchioness openly declared her indignation; to think of uniting myself to a being so low in life and fortune, she said, as Melross, was an insult to the memory of her father, and a degradation to his illustrious house; it would also be a confirmation of the scandalous reports which had already been circulated to the prejudice of my character about him. Her words roused all the violence of my soul: I upbraided her with ingratitude to a parent, who had stepped beyond the bounds of rigid propriety to give her an increase of fortune. My words alarmed her and the marquis. They hastily demanded

an explanation of them. I did not hesitate in giving one, protesting at the same time that I would no longer hurt my feelings on their account, as I found no complaisance to my wishes, but immediately avow lady Malvina Fitzalan the lawful heiress of the earl of Dumreath. The marquis and marchioness changed colour; I saw they trembled lest I should put my threats into execution, though with consummate art they pretended to disbelieve that such a will as I mentioned existed.

“Beware,” cried I, rising from my chair to quit the room, “lest I give you too convincing a proof of its reality; except I meet with the attention and complaisance I have a right to expect, I shall no longer act contrary to the dictates of my conscience by concealing it. Unlimited mistress of my own actions, what but affection for my daughter could make me consult her upon any of them? Her disapprobation proceeds alone from selfishness, since an alliance with Melross, from his profession, accomplishments, and birth, would not disgrace a house even more illustrious than the one she is descended from or connected to.” I retired to my chamber, secretly exulting at the idea of having conquered all opposition, for I plainly perceived, by the marquis and marchioness’s manner, they were convinced it was in my power to deprive them of their newly acquired possessions, which, to secure, I doubted not their sacrificing their pride to my wishes: I exulted in the idea of having my nuptials with Melross celebrated with that splendour I always delighted in, and the prospect of having love and vanity gratified, filled me with a kind of intoxicating happiness. In a few hours after I had retired to my room, the marchioness sent to request an interview with me, which I readily granted. She entered the apartment with a respectful air very unusual to her, and immediately made an apology for her late conduct. She acknowledged I had reason to be offended; but a little reflection had convinced her of her error, and both she and the marquis thanked me for consulting them about the change I was about making in my situation, and would pay every attention in their power to the man I had honoured with

my choice. That I did not think the marchioness sincere in her professions you may believe, but complaisance was all I required. I accompanied her to the marquis; a general reconciliation ensued, and Melross was presented to them.

In about two days after this the marchioness came into my dressing-room one morning, and told me she had a proposal to make, which she hoped would be agreeable to me to comply with; it was the marquis's intention and her's to go immediately to the continent, and they had been thinking, if Melross and I would favour them with our company, that we had better defer our nuptials till we reached Paris, which was the first place they intended visiting, as their solemnization in Scotland, so soon after the earl's decease, might displease his friends, by whom we were surrounded, and, on their return, which would be soon, they would introduce Melross to their connections, as a man every way worthy of their notice.

After a little hesitation I agreed to this plan, for where it interfered not with my own inclinations, I wished to preserve an appearance of propriety to the world, and I could not avoid thinking that my marrying so soon after the earl's death would draw censure upon me, which I should avoid by the projected tour, as the certain time of my nuptials could not then be ascertained. Melross submitted cheerfully to our new arrangements, and it was settled, farther to preserve appearances, that he should go before us to Paris. I supplied him with every thing requisite for making an elegant appearance, and he departed in high spirits at the prospect of his splendid establishment for life.

I counted the moments with impatience for rejoining him, and, as had been settled, we commenced our journey a month after his departure. It was now the middle of winter, and, ere we stopped for the night, darkness almost impenetrable had veiled the earth: fatigued and almost exhausted by the cold, I followed the marquis through a long passage, lighted by a glimmering lamp, to a parlour which was well lighted, and had a comfortable fire. I started with amazement on entering it, at find-

ing myself in a place I thought familiar to me ; my surprise, however, was but for an instant, yet I could not help expressing it to the marquis. "Your eyes, madam," cried he, with a cruel solemnity, "have not deceived you, for you are now in Dunreath Abbey."

"Dunreath Abbey !" I repeated ; "gracious Heaven ! what can be the meaning of this ?"

"To hide your folly, your imprudence, your deceit from the world," he exclaimed ; "to prevent your executing the wild projects of a depraved and distempered mind, by entering into a union at once contemptible and preposterous, and to save those from whom alone you derive your consequence, by your connection with them, farther mortification on your account."

To describe fully the effect of this speech upon a heart like mine is impossible ; the fury which pervaded my soul would, I believed, have hurried me into a deed of dire revenge, had I had the power of executing it—my quivering lips could not express my strong indignation.

"And do you then, in a country like this," I cried, "dare to think you can deprive me of my liberty ?"

"Yes," replied he, with insulting coolness, "when it is known you are incapable of making a proper use of that liberty : you should thank me," he continued, "for palliating your late conduct, by imputing it rather to an intellectual derangement than to total depravity : from what other source than the former could you have asserted that there was a will in lady Malvina Fitzalan's favour ?" These words at once developed the cause of his unjustifiable conduct, and proved that there is no real faith between the guilty. From my disposition the marquis was convinced that I would assume a haughty sway over him in consequence of the secret of the will ; he also dreaded that passion or caprice might one day induce me to betray that secret, and wrest from him his unlawful possessions : thus pride and avarice tempted and determined him, by confining me, to rid himself of these fears.

"Oh! would to heaven," cried I, replying to the last part of his speech, "I had proved my assertion; had I done justice to others, I should not have been entangled in the snare of treachery."

"Prove the assertion now," said he, "by showing me the will, and you may, perhaps," he continued, in a hesitating accent, "find your doing so attended with pleasing consequences." Rage and scorn flashed from my eyes at these words. "No," cried I, "had you the power of torturing, you should not tear it from me. I will keep it to atone for my sins, and expose yours to view by restoring it to the right owner." I demanded my liberty, I threatened, supplicated, but all in vain. The marquis told me I might as well compose myself, for my fate was decided.

"You know," cried he, with a malicious look, "you have no friends to enquire or interfere about you, and even if you had, when I told them what I believe to be the case, that your senses were disordered, they would never desire to have you released from this confinement." I called for my daughter.—"You will see her no more," he replied; "the passions she has so long blushed to behold she will no more witness."

"Rather say," I exclaimed, "that she dare not behold her injured parent; but let not the wretch who has severed the ties of nature hope to escape unpunished; no, my sufferings will draw a dreadful weight upon her head, and may, when least expected, torture her heart with anguish." Convinced that I was entirely in the marquis's power, convinced that I had nothing to hope from him or my daughter, rage, horror, and agony, at their unjust and audacious treatment, kindled in my breast a sudden phrenzy, which strong convulsions only terminated. When I recovered from them I found myself on a bed in a room, which, at the first glance, I knew to be the one the late lady Dunreath had occupied, to whose honours I so unworthily succeeded. Mrs. Bruce, who had been housekeeper at the abbey before my marriage, sat beside me: I hesitated a few minutes whether I should address her as a suppliant or a superior; the latter, however,

being most agreeable to my inclinations, I bid her, with a haughty air, which I hoped would awe her into obedience, assist me in rising, and procure some conveyance from the abbey without delay. The marquis entered the chamber as I spoke. "Compose yourself, madam," said he, "your destiny, I repeat it, is irrevocable; this abbey is your future residence, and bless those who have afforded your follies such an asylum; it behoves both the marchioness and me indeed to seclude a woman who might cast imputations on our characters, which those unacquainted with them might believe." I started from the bed, in the loose dress in which they had placed me on it, and, stamping round the room, demanded my liberty.—The marquis heard my demand with contemptuous silence, and quitted the room. I attempted to rush after him, but he pushed me back with violence, and closed the door. My feelings again brought on convulsions, which terminated in a delirium and fever. In this situation the marquis and marchioness abandoned me, hoping, no doubt, that my disorder would soon lay me in a prison, even more secure than the one they had devoted me to. Many weeks elapsed ere I showed any symptom of recovery. On regaining my senses I seemed as if awaking from a tedious sleep, in which I had been tortured with frightful visions. The first object my eyes beheld, now blessed with the powers of clear perception, was Mrs. Bruce bending over my pillow, with a look of anxiety and grief, which implied a wish, yet a doubt, of my recovery.

"Tell me," said I faintly, "am I really in Dunreath Abbey, am I really confined within its walls by order of my child?"

Mrs. Bruce sighed. "Do not disturb yourself with questions now," said she; "the reason heaven has so mercifully restored would be ill employed in vain murmurs."

"Vain murmurs!" I repeated, and a deep desponding sigh burst from my heart. I lay silent a long time after this; the gloom which encompassed me at length grew too dreary to be borne, and I desired Mrs. Bruce

to draw back the curtains of the bed and windows. She obeyed, and the bright beams of the sun darting into the room, displayed to my view an object I could not behold without shuddering; this was the portrait of lady Dunreath exactly opposite the bed. My mind was softened by illness, and I felt in that moment as if her sainted spirit stood before me to awaken my conscience to remorse, and my heart to repentance; the benevolence which had irradiated the countenance of the original with a celestial expression, was powerfully expressed upon the canvas, and recalled, oh! how affectingly to my memory, the period in which this most amiable of women gave me a refuge in her house, in her arms, from the storms of life, and yet her child, I groaned, her child I was accessory in destroying. Oh! how excruciating were my feelings at this period of awakened conscience; I no longer inveighed against my sufferings; I considered them in the light of retribution, and felt an awful resignation take possession of my soul. Yes, groaned I to myself, it is fit that in the very spot in which I triumphed in deceit and cruelty, I should meet the punishment due to my misdeeds.

The change in my disposition produced a similar one in my temper, so that Mrs. Bruce found the task of attending on me easier than she had imagined it would be; yet I did not submit to my confinement, without many efforts to liberate myself through her means; but her fidelity to her unnatural employers was not to be shaken. Blushing, however, at my past enormities, I should rather have shrunk from than solicited admission again into the world, had not my ardent desire of making reparation to the descendants of lady Dunreath influenced me to desire my freedom. Oh! never did that desire cease—never did a morning dawn, an evening close, without entreating Heaven to allow me the means of restoring to the injured their inheritance. Mrs. Bruce, though steady, was not cruel, and nursed me with the tenderest attention till my health was re-established: she then ceased to see me, except at night; but took care I should be always amply stocked with neces-

saries. She supplied me with religious and moral books; also materials for writing, if I chose to amuse myself with making comments on them. To those books I am indebted, for being able to endure, with some degree of calmness, my long and dreadful captivity; they enlarged my heart, they enlightened its ideas concerning the Supreme Being, they impressed it with awful submission to his will, they convinced me more forcibly than my transgressions, yet without exciting despair, for while they showed me the horrors of vice, they proved the efficacy of repentance. Debarred of the common enjoyments of life, air, exercise, and society, in vain my heart assured me my punishment was inadequate to my crimes; nature repined, and a total languor seized me. Mrs. Bruce at last told me that I should be allowed the range of that part of the building in which I was confined (for I had hitherto been limited to one room), and consequently air from the windows, if I promised to make no attempt for recovering my freedom, an attempt which she assured me would prove abortive, as none but people attached to the marquis lived in or about the Abbey, who would immediately betray me to him, and if he ever detected such a step, it was his determination to hurry me to France.

Certain that he would be capable of such baseness, touched by the smallest indulgence, and eager to procure any recreation, I gave her the most solemn assurances of never attempting to make known my situation. She accordingly unlocked the several doors that had hitherto impeded my progress from one apartment to another, and removed the iron bolts which secured the shutters of the window. Oh! with what mingled pain and pleasure did I contemplate the rich prospect stretched before them, now that I was debarred from enjoying it; at liberty, I wondered how I could ever have contemplated it with a careless eye, and my spirits, which the air had revived, suddenly sunk into despondence, when I reflected I enjoyed this common blessing but by stealth; yet who (cried I with agony) can I blame but myself? The choicest gifts of Heaven were mine, and I lost them

by my own means; wretch as I was, the first temptation that assailed, warped me from integrity, and my error is marked by the deprivation of every good; with eager, with enthusiastic delight, I gazed on scenes which I had so often before regarded with a careless eye; it seemed as if I had only now perception to distinguish their beauties. The season's difference made a material change to me, as all the windows were shut up in winter, except those of the apartment I occupied, which only looked into a gloomy court: ah! how welcome to me then was the return of spring, which again restored to me the indulgence of visiting the windows; how delightful to my eyes the green of the valley, and the glowing bloom of the mountain-shrubs just bursting into verdure; ah! how soothing to my ear the lulling sound of water-falls, and the lively carol of the birds; how refreshing the sweetness of the air, the fragrance of the plants, which friendly zephyrs, as if pitying my confinement, wafted through the windows; the twilight hour was also hailed by me with delight; it was then I turned my eyes from earth to heaven, and, regarding its blue and spangled vault but as a thin covering between me and myriads of angels, felt a sweet sensation of mingled piety and pleasure, which, for the time, had power to steep my sorrows in forgetfulness! But, in relating my feelings, I wander from the real purpose of my narrative, and forget that I am describing those feelings to a person, who, from my injurious actions, can take but little interest in them.

The will I shall deliver to you to-night: I advise you, if your brother cannot immediately be found, to put it into the hands of some man, on whose abilities and integrity you can rely; but, till you meet with such a person, beware of discovering you have it in your possession, lest the marquis, who, I am sorry to say, I believe capable of almost any baseness, should remove from your knowledge the penitent, whose testimony to the validity of the deed will so cheerfully be given, and is so materially essential: be secret, then, I again conjure you, till every thing is properly arranged for the avowal of your rights; and oh! may the restoration of all those rights

you shall claim be to you and to your brother productive of every felicity. From your hands, may the wealth it puts into them bestow relief and comfort on the children of adversity; thus yielding to your hearts a pure and permanent satisfaction, which the mere possession of riches, or their expenditure on idle vanities, can never bestow. As much as possible, I wish to have my daughter saved from public disgrace; from me you will say she merits not this lenient wish; but, alas! I hold myself accountable for her misconduct; entrusted to my care by Providence, I neglected the sacred charge, nor ever curbed a passion, or laid the foundation of a virtue. Ah! may her wretched parent's prayers be yet availing—may penitence, ere too late, visit her heart, and teach her to regret and expiate her errors. Had she been united to a better man, I think she never would have swerved so widely from nature and from duty; but the selfish soul of the marquis taught her to regard self as the first consideration in life.

Mrs. Bruce informed me that the marquis had written to Melross, informing him that I had changed my mind, and would think no more about him, and she supposed he had procured some pleasant establishment in France, as no one had ever heard of his returning from it. She made several attempts to prevail on me to give up the will to her; but I resisted all her arts, and was rejoiced to think I had concealed it in a place which would never be suspected. My narrative now concluded, I wait with trembling impatience for your expected visit, for that moment, in which I shall make some reparation for my injuries to your mother. I am also anxious for the moment in which I shall receive the promised narrative of your life: from your tears, your words, your manner, I may expect a tale of sorrow; ah! may it only be that gentle sorrow which yields to the influence of time, and the sweets of friendship and conscious innocence.

I cannot forbear describing what I felt on first hearing your voice—a voice so like, in its harmonious tone, to one I knew had long been silent: impressed with an awful dread, I stood upon the stairs, which I was descending.

to visit the chapel, as was my constant custom, at the close of the day; shivering and appalled, I had not, for a few minutes, power to move; but when I at last ventured nearer to the door, and saw you kneeling before the dust-covered shade of her I had injured, when I heard you call yourself her wretched orphan, ah! what were my emotions! an awful voice seemed sounding in my ear—Behold! the hour of restitution is arrived! behold a being whom the hand of Providence has conducted hither, to receive reparation for the injustice you did her parents! adore that mighty hand that thus affords you means of making atonement for your offences! I did adore it; I raised my streaming eyes, my trembling hands to heaven, and blessed the gracious Power which had granted my prayer. The way by which I saw you quit my retirement proved to me your entrance into it was unknown. With an impatience bordering on agony I waited for the next evening: it came without bringing you, and no language can express my disappointment. Dejected I returned to my chamber, which you entered soon after, and where you received so great a fright; yet, be assured, not a greater one than I experienced; for the gloom of moonlight, which displayed me to you, gave you full to my view, and I beheld the very form and face of lady Malvina. In form and face may you alone resemble her! different, far different be your destiny from her's! Soon may your brother be restored to your arms! Should he then shudder at my name, oh! teach him, with a mercy like your own, to accord me forgiveness.

Ye sweet and precious descendants of this illustrious house—ye rightful heirs of Dunreath Abbey—may your future joys amply recompense your past sorrows! may those sorrows be forgotten, or only remembered to temper prosperity, and teach it pity for the woes of others! may your virtues add to the renown of your ancestors, and entail eternal peace upon your souls! may their line by you be continued, and continued as a blessing to all around! may your names be consecrated to posterity by the voice of gratitude, and excite in others an emulation to pursue your courses!

Alas! my unhappy child! why do I not express such a wish for you? I have expressed it—I have prayed for its accomplishment—I have wept in bitterness at the idea of its being unavailing; lost to the noble propensities of nature, it is not from virtue, but from pomp and vanity, you seek to derive pleasure.

Oh! lonely orphans of Malvina! did you but know, or could you but conceive, the bitter anguish I endure on my daughter's account, you would think yourselves amply avenged for all your injuries.

Oh God! ere my trembling soul leaves its frail tenement of clay, let it be cheered by the knowledge of my child's repentance.

Oh! you young and tender pair, who are about entering into the dangerous possession of riches, learn from me that their misapplication, the perversion of our talents, and the neglect of our duties, will, even in this world, meet their punishment.

Resolute in doing justice to the utmost of my power, I am ready, whenever I am called upon, to bear evidence to the validity of the will I shall deliver into your possession. Soon may all it entitles you to be restored, is the sincere prayer of her who subscribes herself

The truly penitent

ANNABELLA DUNREATH:

END OF VOL. III.

THE
CHILDREN
OF
THE ABBEY.
A TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY REGINA MARIA ROCHE.

A matchless pair ;
With equal virtue form'd and equal grace,
The same, distinguish'd by their sex alone :
Her's the mild lustre of the blooming morn,
And his the radiance of the risen day.

THOMSON.

SEVENTH AMERICAN EDITION.

VOL. IV.

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.....
1812.

THE CHILDREN OF THE ABBEY.

CHAP. I.

Cease then, ah ! cease, fond mortal, to repine
At laws, which Nature wisely did ordain :
Pleasure, what is it, rightly to define ?
'Tis but a short-lived interval from pain ;
Or, rather, each alternately renew'd,
Gives to our lives a sweet vicissitude.

BROWN.

THE emotions Amanda experienced from reading this narrative deeply affected, but gradually subsided from her mind, leaving it only occupied by pity for the penitent Lady Dunreath, and pleasure at the prospect of Oscar's independence, a pleasure so pure, so fervent, that it had power to steal her from her sorrows, and when the recollection of them again returned, she endeavoured to banish it by thinking of the necessity there was for immediately adopting some plan for the disclosure of the will Lady Dunreath had advised her to put into the hands of a friend of integrity and abilities.

"But where," cried the disconsolate Amanda, "can I find such a friend?" The few, the very few whom she had reason to think regarded her, had neither power nor ability to assist her in what would probably be an arduous demand for restitution. After sitting a considerable time in deep meditation, the idea of Rushbrook suddenly occurred, and she started, as if in joy.

ful surprise at the remembrance; she considered that, though almost a stranger to him, an application of such a nature must rather be regarded as a compliment than a liberty, from the great opinion it would prove she had of his honour by intrusting him with such a secret. From his looks and manner she was convinced he would not only deeply feel for the injured, but ably advise how those injuries should be redressed. From his years and his situation there could be no impropriety in addressing him, and she already in imagination beheld him her friend, advocate, and adviser: he also, she trusted, would be able to put her in a way of making enquiries after Oscar. Oh! how delightful the prospect of discovering that brother, of discovering but to put him in possession of even a splendid independence. Ah! how sweet the idea of being again folded to her heart, interested in her welfare, after so long a solitary mourner treading the rugged path of life, and bending as she went beneath its adverse storm. Ah! how sweet again to meet an eye that should beam with tenderness on her's; an ear, which should listen with attentive rapture to her accents, and a voice that would sooth with softest sympathy her sorrows: it is only those, who, like her, have known the social ties of life in all their sweetness, who like her have mourned their loss with all the bitterness of anguish, that can possibly conceive her feelings as these ideas occurred to her mind. "Oh! Oscar, oh! my brother," she exclaimed, while tears wet her pale cheeks, "how rapturous the moment which restores you to me! How delightful to think your youth will no more experience the chill of poverty, your benevolence no longer suffer restraints! Now will your virtues shine forth with full lustre, dignifying the house from which you have descended, doing service to your country, and spreading diffusive happiness around."

The morning surprised Amanda in the midst of her meditations. She opened the shutters, and hailed its first glories in the eastern hemisphere: the sunbeams exhaling the mists of the valley displayed its

smiling verdure, forming a fine contrast to the deep shadows that yet partially enveloped the surrounding mountains; the morning breeze gently agitated the old trees, from whose bending heads unnumbered birds arose, and in their matin notes seemed to consecrate the first return of day to the Great Author of Light and Life!

Spontaneous praise burst from the lips of Amanda, and she felt all that calm and sweet delight which ever pervades a mind of religion and sensibility on viewing the rural beauties of nature. She left the charming scene to try and get a little rest, but she thought not of undressing; she soon sunk into a gentle sleep, and awoke with renovated spirits near the breakfast hour.

Mrs. Bruce expressed the utmost regret at the necessity there was for parting with her guests; but added, that she believed, as well as hoped, their absence from her would be but short, as she was sure the Marquis's family would leave Scotland almost immediately after Lady Euphrasia's nuptials. In vain did Amanda struggle for fortitude to support the mention of those nuptials; her frame trembled, her heart sickened whenever they were talked of; the spirits she had endeavoured to collect, from the idea that they would all be requisite in the important affair she must undertake, fled away at Mrs. Bruce's words, and a heavy languor took possession of her.

They did not leave the Abbey till after tea in the evening, and the idea that she might soon behold her brother, the acknowledged heir of that Abbey, cast again a gleam of pleasure on the sad heart of Amanda; a gleam, I say, for it faded before the almost instantaneous recollection, that ere that period Lord Mortimer and Lady Euphrasia would be united: sunk in a profound melancholy, she forgot her situation, heeded not the progress of the carriage, or remarked any object; a sudden jolt roused her from her reverie, and she blushed as she thought of the suspicions it might give rise to in the mind of Mrs. Duncan, whose intelligent

eye, on the preceding night, had more than half confessed her knowledge of Amanda's feelings. She now, though with some embarrassment, attempted to enter into conversation, and Mrs. Duncan, who with deep attention had marked her pensive companion, with much cheerfulness, rendered the attempt a successful one. The chaise was now turning from the valley, and Amanda leaned from her window to take another view of Dunroath Abbey. The sun was already sunk below the horizon, but a tract of glory still remained, that marked the spot in which its daily course was finished; a dubious lustre yet played around the spires of the Abbey, and while it displayed its vast magnificence, by contrast added to its gloom, a gloom heightened by the dreary solitude of its situation, for the valley was entirely overshadowed by the dark projection of the mountains, on whose summits a few bright and lingering beams yet remained, that showed the wild shrubs waving in the evening breeze: a pensive spirit seemed now to have taken possession of Mrs. Duncan, a spirit congenial to the scene, and the rest of the little journey was past almost in silence. Their lodgings were at the entrance of the town, and Mrs. Bruce had taken care they should find every requisite refreshment within them. The woman of the house had already prepared a comfortable supper for them, which was served up soon after their arrival. When over, Mrs. Duncan, assisted by Amanda, put the children to bed, as she knew, till accustomed to her, they would not like the attendance of the maid of the house. Neither she or Amanda felt sleepy; it was a fine moonlight night, and they were tempted to walk out upon a terrace, to which a glass door from the room opened; the terrace overhung a deep valley which stretched to the sea, and the rocky promontory that terminated it, was crowned with the ruins of an ancient castle; the moon-beams seemed to sleep upon its broken battlements, and the waves that stole-murmuring to the shore cast a silvery spray around it. A pensive pleasure pervaded the hearts of Mrs. Duncan and Amanda, and, conversing on the charms of the scene, they walked up and down,

when suddenly upon the floating air they distinguished the sound of a distant drum beating the tattoo: both stopped, and leaned upon a fragment of a parapet wall, which had once stretched along the terrace, and Mrs. Duncan, who knew the situation of the country, said, that the sounds they heard proceeded from a fort near the town." They ceased in a short time, but were almost immediately succeeded by martial music, and Amanda soon distinguished an admired march of her father's. Ah! how affectingly did it remind her of him. She recalled the moments in which she had played it for him, whilst he hung over her chair with delight and tenderness, she wept at the tender remembrances it excited, wept at listening to sounds which had so often given to his pale cheek the flush of ardour.

They did not return to the house till convinced, by a long interval of silence, that the music had ceased for the night.

Amanda having formed a plan relative to the will, determined not to delay executing it. She had often mentioned to Mrs. Duncan her uneasiness concerning her brother, as an excuse for the melancholy that lady, in a half-serious, half-jesting manner, so often rallied her about, and she now intended to assign her journey to London (which she was resolved should immediately take place) to her anxious wish of discovering, or at least inquiring about him; the next morning she accordingly mentioned her intention. Mrs. Duncan was not only surprised but concerned, and endeavoured to dissuade her from it, by representing, in the most forcible manner, the dangers she might experience in so long a journey without a protector.

Amanda assured her she was already aware of these, but the apprehensions they excited were less painful than the anxiety she suffered on her brother's account, and ended by declaring her resolution unalterable.

Mrs. Duncan, who in her heart could not blame Amanda for such a resolution, now expressed her hopes that she would not make a longer stay in London than was absolutely necessary, declaring that her society would be a loss she could scarcely support.

somewhat of their heaviness. On arriving in London she designed going to the haberdasher's, where it may be remembered she had once met miss Rushbrook; here she hoped to procure lodgings, also a direction to Rushbrook. It was about five when they stopped for the night, as the shortened days of autumn would not permit a longer journey, had the tired horses, which was not the case, been able to proceed. They stopped at the inn, which Mrs. Duncan had taken care to know would be the last stage of the first day's journey, a small but neat and comfortable house, romantically situated at the foot of a steep hill, planted with ancient firs, and crowned with the straggling remains of what appeared to have been a religious house, from a small cross which yet stood over a broken gateway; a stream trickled from the hill, though its murmur through the thick underwood alone denoted its rising there, and winding round the inn, flowed in meanders through a spacious vale, of which the inn was not the lone inhabitant, for cottages appeared on either side, and one large mansion stood in the centre, whose superior size, and neat plantations, proclaimed a master of the whole. This was really the case, for immediately on entering the inn, Amanda had inquired about the Macqueen family, to whom Mrs. Duncan's letter was directed, and learned that they inhabited this house, and owned the grounds to a large extent surrounding it. Amanda gave Mrs. Duncan's letter to the landlady, and begged she would send it directly to Mrs. Macqueen. The inn was without company, and its quiet retirement, together with the appearance of the owners, an elderly pair, soothed the agitated spirits of Amanda. Her little dinner was soon served up; but when over, and she was left to herself, all the painful ideas she had so sedulously, and with some degree of success, attempted to banish from her mind in the morning by attending to the objects she passed, now returned with full, or rather aggravated force. Books, those pleasing, and in affliction alleviating resources, she had forgotten to bring along with her, and all that the inn contained she had been shown on a shelf in the

apartment she occupied, but without finding one that could possibly fix her attention, or change its melancholy ideas; a ramble, though the evening was uninviting, she preferred to the passive indulgence of her sorrow, and having ordered tea against her return, and invited the landlady to it, she was conducted to the garden of the inn, from whence she ascended the hill by a winding path. She made her way with difficulty through a path, which, seldom trodden, was half choaked with weeds and brambles; the wind blew cold and sharp around her, and the gloom of closing day was heightened by thick and lowering clouds, that involved the distant mountains in one dark shade. Near those mountains she knew the domain of Rosline lay, and from the bleak summit of the hill, she surveyed them as a lone mourner would survey the sad spot in which the pleasure of his heart was buried; forgetting the purpose for which she had walked out, she leaned in melancholy reverie against a fragment of the ruined building, nor heard approaching footsteps, till the voice of her host suddenly broke upon her ear. She started, and perceived him accompanied by two ladies, who he directly informed her were Mrs. and Miss Macqueen. They both went up to Amanda, and after the usual compliments of introduction were over, Mrs. Macqueen took her hand, and, with a smile of cordial good nature, invited her to her house for the night, declaring that the pleasure she received from Mrs. Duncan's letter was heightened by being introduced through its means to a person that lady mentioned as her particular friend. Miss Macqueen seconded her mother's invitation, and said, "the moment they had read the letter they had come out for the purpose of bringing her back with them."

"Ay, ay," said the host good humouredly (who was himself descended from one of the inferior branches of the Macqueen's), "this is the way, ladies, you always rob me of my guests. In good faith I think I must soon change my dwelling, and go higher up the valley."

Conscious, from her utter dejection, that she would be unable, as she wished, to participate in the pleasures^{ad}

of conversation, Amanda declined the invitation, alleging as an excuse for doing so, her intention of proceeding on her journey the next morning by dawn of day.

Mrs. Macqueen declared, that she should act as she pleased in that respect, and both she and her daughter renewed their entreaties for her company with such earnestness, that Amanda could no longer refuse them, and they returned to the inn, where Amanda begged they would excuse her absence for a few minutes, and retired to pay her entertainers, and repeat her charges to the postillion to be at the house as soon as he should think any of the family stirring. She then returned to the ladies, and attended them to their mansion, which might well be termed the seat of hospitality. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Macqueen, four sons and six daughters, all now past childhood; and united to one another by the strictest ties of duty and affection. After residing a few years at Edinburgh for the improvement of the young people, Mr. and Mrs. Macqueen returned to their mansion in the valley, where a large fortune was spent in the enjoyment of agreeable society and acts of benevolence. Mrs. Macqueen informed Amanda during the walk that all her family were now assembled together, as her sons, who were already engaged in different professions and in business in various parts of the kingdom, made it a constant rule to pay a visit every autumn to their friends. It was quite dark before the ladies reached the house, and the wind was sharp and cold, so that Amanda found the light and warmth of the drawing-room, to which she was conducted, extremely agreeable. The thick window curtains and carpeting, and the enlivening fire, bid defiance to the sharpness of the mountain blast which howled without, and rendered the comforts within more delectable by the effect of contrast. In the drawing-room were Mr. Macqueen, two of his daughters, and half a dozen ladies and gentlemen, to whom Amanda was presented, and they in return to her. In the countenance of Mr. Macqueen, Amanda perceived a benevolence equal to that which irradiated his wife's. Both were past the prime of life, but in him only was its

decline visible. He was lately grown so infirm as to be unable to remove without assistance; yet was his relish for society undiminished, and in his arm-chair, his legs muffled in flannel, and supported by pillows, he promoted as much as ever the mirth of his family, and saw with delight the dance go on in which he had once mixed with his children. Mrs. Macqueen appeared but as the elder sister of her daughters, and between them all Amanda perceived a strong family-likeness; they were tall, well, but not delicately made; handsome, yet more indebted to the animation of their countenances than to regularity of features for beauty, which was rendered luxuriant by a quantity of rich auburn hair, that, unrestrained by superfluous ornaments, fell in long ringlets on their shoulders, and curled with a sweet simplicity on their white polished foreheads.

“So, the boys and girls are not yet returned,” said Mrs. Macqueen, addressing one of her daughters; “I am afraid they have taken their friends too far.” She had scarcely spoken when a party was heard, under the windows, laughing and talking, who ascended the stairs immediately, in a kind of gay tumult. The drawing-room door opened, and a lady entered, of a most prepossessing appearance, though advanced in life, and was followed by a number of young people.

But, oh! what were the powerful emotions of Amanda's soul, when amongst them she beheld lady Araminta Dormer and lord Mortimer!—Shocked, confused, confounded, she strained an eye of agony upon them, as if with a hope of detecting an illusion; then dropped her head, anxious to conceal herself, though she was fatally convinced she could be but a few minutes unobserved by them. Never, amidst the many trying moments of her life, had she experienced one more dreadful; to behold lord Mortimer, when she knew his esteem for her was lost, at a period too when he was hastening to be united to another woman—oh! it was agony, torture in the extreme! vainly did she reflect she deserved not to lose his esteem: this consciousness could not at present inspire her with fortitude; her heart throbbed as if it would

burst; her bosom, her frame trembled, and she alternately experienced the glow of confusion and the chill of dismay—dismay at the idea of meeting the silent, but expressive reproach of lord Mortimer's eye, for her imaginary errors—dismay at the idea of meeting the contempt of his aunt (who was the lady that first entered the room) and sister.

CHAP. II.

I would raise your pity ; but to see the tears
 Force thro' her snowy lids their melting course,
 To lodge themselves on her red morn'ring lips,
 That talk such mournful things ; when straight a gale
 Of starting sighs carry those pearls away,
 As dews by winds are wafted from the flow'rs.

LEE.

BITTERLY did Amanda regret having been tempted from the inn, and gratefully would she have acquitted fortune of half its malignancy to her, had she been able to steal back unnoticed. The party that entered, engaged in talking to those they found in the drawing-room (laughing, and describing their ramble, which lady Araminta said was in the style of will-o'-the-wisp, over brakes and through briers), were some time before they observed Amanda; but soon, how much too soon, did she perceive Mrs. Macqueen approaching to introduce those of her family who were just returned.

"The trying moment is come," cried Amanda, "oh! let me not by my confusion look as if I really was the guilty thing I am supposed to be." She endeavoured to collect herself, and rose to meet the young Macqueens,

by a timid glance perceiving that they yet hid her from the eyes she most dreaded to encounter : she was unable, however, to return their compliments, except by a faint smile, and was again sinking upon her seat, for her frame trembled universally, when Mrs. Macqueen, taking her hand, led her forward, and presented her to lady Martha and lady Araminta Dormer. It may be remembered that lady Martha had never before seen Amanda ; she therefore gave her, as miss Donald, a benignant smile, which, had she supposed her miss Fitzalan, would have been lost in a contemptuous frown : seldom, indeed, had she seen a form more interesting than our heroine's ; her mourning habit set off the elegance of her form and the languid delicacy of her complexion, whilst the sad expression of her countenance denoted that habit but the shadow of the unseen grief which dwelt within her soul ; her large blue eyes were half concealed by their long lashes, but the beams that stole from beneath those fringed curtains were full of sweetness and sensibility ; her fine hair, discomposed by the jolting of the carriage and the blowing of the wind, had partly escaped the braid on which it was turned under her hat, and hung in long ringlets of glossy brown upon her shoulders, and careless curls about her face, giving a sweet simplicity to it, which heightened its beauty. How different was the look she received from lady Araminta to that she had received from lady Martha ! in the expressive countenance of the former she read surprise, contempt, and anger ; her cheeks were flushed with unusual colour, her eyes sparkled with uncommon lustre, and their quick glances pierced the palpitating heart of Amanda, who heard her repeat, as if involuntarily, the name of Donald. Ah ! how dreadful was the sound to her ear ! how sad a confirmation did it convey, that every suspicion to her prejudice would now be strengthened ! — “ Ah ! why — why,” said she to herself, “ was I tempted to take this hated name ? Why did I not prefer incurring any danger to which my own might have exposed me, rather than assume any thing like deceit ? ” Happily the party were too much engross-

ed by one another to heed the words or manner of lady Araminta.

Amanda withdrew her hand from Mrs. Macqueen, and moved tremblingly to her seat; but that lady, with a politeness poor Amanda had reason to think officious, stopped her.—“Miss Donald—lord Mortimer;” said she. Amanda raised her head, but not her eyes, and neither saw or heard his lordship. The scene she had dreaded was over, and she felt a little relieved at the idea. The haughty glance of lady Araminta dwelt upon her mind, and, when her agitation had a little subsided, she stole a look at her, and saw Mrs. Macqueen sitting between her and lady Martha, and, from the altered countenance of the latter, she instantly conjectured she had been informed by her niece of her real name. She also conjectured, from the glances directed towards her, that she was the subject of conversation, and concluded it was begun for the purpose of discovering whether Mrs. Macqueen knew any thing of her real history.

From these glances she quickly withdrew her own, and one of the young Macqueens, drawing a chair near her's, began a conversation with all that spirit and vivacity which distinguished his family. The mind of Amanda was too much occupied by its own concerns to be able to attend to any thing foreign to them; she scarcely knew what he said, and, when she did reply, it was only by monosyllables. At last a question, enforced with peculiar earnestness, roused her from this inattention, and, blushing for it, she looked at the young man, and perceived him regarding her with something like wonder. She now, for the first time, considered the strange appearance she must make amongst the company, if she did not collect and compose her spirits. The family too, to whom she was, she could not not help thinking, so unfortunately introduced, from their hospitality merited attention and respect from her; she resolved, therefore, to struggle with her feelings, and, as an apology for her absent manner, complained, and not without truth, of a head-ache.

Young Macqueen, with a friendly warmth, said he would acquaint his mother, or one of his sisters, with her indisposition, and procure some remedy for it; but she insisted he should on no account disturb the company, assuring him she would soon be well. She then endeavoured to support a conversation with him; but, ah! how often did she pause in the midst of what she was saying, as the sweet insinuating voice of Mortimer reached her ear, who, with his native elegance and spirit, was participating in the lively conversation then going forward. In her's with young Macqueen she was soon interrupted by his father, who, in a good-humoured manner, told his son he would no longer suffer him to engross miss Donald to himself, and desired him to lead her to a chair near his.



Young Macqueen immediately arose, and, taking Amanda's hand, led her to his father, by whom he seated her, and by whom, on the other side, sat lady Martha Dormer; then, with a modest gallantry, declared it was the first time he ever felt reluctance to obey his father's commands, and hoped his ready acquiescence to them would be rewarded with speedy permission to resume his conversation with miss Donald. Amanda had hitherto prevented her eyes from wandering, though they could not exclude the form of lord Mortimer; she had not yet seen his face, and still strove to avoid doing so. Mr. Macqueen began with various inquiries relative to Mrs. Duncan, to which Amanda, as she was prepared for them, answered with tolerable composure. Suddenly he dropped the subject of his relation, and asked Amanda "from what branch of the Donalds she descended?" A question so unexpected shocked, dismayed, and overwhelmed her with confusion:—she made no reply till the question was repeated, when, in a low and faltering voice, her face covered with blushes, and almost buried in her bosom, she said, "she did not know."

"Well," cried he again, changing his discourse, after looking at her a few minutes, "I did not know any girl but yourself would take such pains to hide such a pair of

eyes as you have; I suppose you are conscious of the mischief they have the power of doing, and therefore it is from compassion to mankind you try to conceal them."

Amanda blushed yet more deeply than before, at finding her downcast looks were noticed. She turned her's with quickness to Mr. Macqueen, who, having answered a question of lady Martha's, thus proceeded: "And so you do not know from which branch of the Donalds you are descended? Perhaps now you only forget, and, if I was to mention them, one by one, your memory might be refreshed; but first let me ask your father's surname, and what countrywoman he married, for the Donalds generally marry amongst each other?"

Oh! how forcibly was Amanda, at this moment, convinced (if indeed her pure soul wanted such conviction) of the pain, the shame of deception, let the motive be what it may which prompts it. Involuntarily were her eyes turned from Mr. Macqueen, as he paused for a reply to his last question, and at the moment encountered those of lord Mortimer, who sat directly opposite to her, and with deep attention regarded her, as if anxious to hear how she would extricate herself from the embarrassment her assumed name had plunged her into.

Her confusion, her blushes, her too evident distress, were all imputed by Mrs. Macqueen to fatigue at listening to such tedious inquiries: she knew her husband's only foible was an eager desire to trace every one's pedigree; in order, therefore, to relieve Amanda from her present situation, she proposed a party of whist, at which Mr. Macqueen often amused himself, and for which the table and cards were already laid before him. As she took up the cards, to hand them to  who were to draw, she whispered Amanda to go over  the tea-table.

Amanda required no repetition now, and, thanking Mrs. Macqueen in her heart for the relief she afforded her, went to the table, around which almost all the young people were crowded. So great was the mirth going on amongst them, that miss Macqueen, the gravest of the set, in vain called upon her sisters to assist her in serving

the trays, which the servants handed about, and Mrs. Macqueen had more than once called for; miss Macqueen made room for Amanda by herself, and Amanda, anxious to do any thing which could keep her from encountering the eyes she dreaded, requested to be employed in assisting her, and was deputed to fill out the coffee. After the first performance of her task, miss Macqueen, in a whispering voice, said to Amanda, "Do you know we are all here more than half in love with lord Mortimer; he is certainly very handsome, and his manner is quite as pleasing as his looks, for he has none of that foppery and conceit which handsome men so generally have, and nothing but the knowledge of his engagement could keep us from pulling caps about him. You have heard to be sure of lady Euphrasia Sutherland, the marquis of Rosline's daughter; well, he is going to be married to her immediately. She and the marquis and the marchioness were here the other day; she is not to be compared to lord Mortimer, but she has what will make her be considered very handsome in the eyes of many, namely, a large fortune. They only stopped to breakfast here, and ever since we have been on the watch for the rest of the party, who arrived this morning, and were on lady Martha's account, whom the journey has fatigued, prevailed to stay till to-morrow. I am very glad you came while they are here: I think both ladies charming women, and lady Araminta quite as handsome as her brother: but see," she continued, touching Amanda's hand, "the conquering hero comes." Lord Mortimer with difficulty made his way round the table, and accepted a seat from miss Macqueen, which she eagerly offered him, and which she contrived to procure by sitting close to Amanda. To her next neighbour, a fine lively girl, Amanda now turned, and entered into conversation with her; but from this she was soon called by miss Macqueen requesting her to pour out a cup of coffee for lord Mortimer.

Amanda obeyed, and he arose to receive it; her hand trembled as she presented it. She looked not in his face, but she thought his hand was not quite steady. She

saw him lay the cup on the table, and bend his eyes to the ground. She heard Miss Macqueen address him twice ere she received an answer, and then it was so abrupt that it seemed the effect of sudden recollection. Miss Macqueen grew almost as inattentive to the table as her sisters, and Mrs. Macqueen was obliged to come over to know what they were all about. At length the business of the tea-table was declared over, and almost at the same moment the sound of a violin was heard from an adjoining room, playing an English country dance, in which style of dancing the Macqueens had been instructed in Edinburgh, and chose this evening in compliance to their guests. The music was a signal for universal motion; all in a moment was bustle and gay confusion. The young men instantly selected their partners, who seemed ready to dance from one room to another. The young Macqueen, who had been so assiduous about Amanda, now came, and taking her hand, as if her dancing was a thing of course, was leading her after the rest of the party, when she drew back, declaring she could not dance. Surprised and disappointed, he stood looking at her in silence, as if irresolute whether he should not attempt to change her resolution. At last he spoke, and requested she would not mortify him by a refusal.


Mrs. Macqueen, hearing her son's request, came forward and joined in it. Amanda pleaded her head-ach.

"Do, my dear," said Mrs. Macqueen, "try one dance; my girls will tell you dancing is a sovereign remedy for every thing." It was painful to Amanda to refuse; but scarcely able to stand, she was utterly unable to dance; had even her strength permitted her to do so, she should not have supported the idea of mingling in the set with Lord Mortimer, the glance of whose eye she never caught without a throb in her heart, which shook her whole frame. One of the Miss Macqueens now ran into the room, exclaiming, "Lord, Colin, what are you about? Lord Mortimer and my sister have already led off; do pray make haste and join us," and away she ran again.

"Let me no longer detain you," said Amanda, withdrawing her hand.—Young Macqueen, finding her inflexible, at length went off to seek a partner. He was as fond of dancing as his sisters, and feared he should not procure one; but luckily there were fewer gentlemen than ladies present, and a lady having stood up with his youngest sister he easily prevailed on her to change her partner.

"We will go into the dancing-room if you please," said Mrs. Macqueen to Amanda, "that will amuse without fatiguing you."—Amanda would rather have not gone, but she could not say so, and they proceeded to it. Lord Mortimer had just concluded the dance, and was standing near the door in a pensive attitude, miss Macqueen being too much engrossed by something she was saying to the young lady next to her to mind him. The moment he perceived Amanda enter, he again approached his partner, and began chatting in a lively manner to her.—Amanda and Mrs. Macqueen sat down together, and, in listening to the conversation of that lady, Amanda found herself insensibly drawn from a too painful attention to surrounding objects. On expressing the pleasure which a mind of sensibility must feel on witnessing such family happiness as Mrs. Macqueen possessed, that lady said, "She had reason indeed to be grateful to Heaven, and was truly so, for her domestic comfort. You see us now (she continued) in our gayest season, because of my son's company; but we are seldom dull; though summer is delightful, we never think the winter tedious; yet though we love amusement, I assure you, we dislike dissipation; the mornings are appropriated to business, and the evenings to recreation; all the while the family goes through the hands of my daughters, and they wear nothing ornamental which they do not make themselves; assisted by their good neighbours, they are enabled to diversify their amusements; the dance succeeds the concert, sometimes small plays, and now and then little dramatic entertainments. About two years ago they performed

the Winter's Tale; their poor father was not then in his present situation. Mrs. Macqueen sighed, paused a minute, and then proceeded: "Time must take something from us; but I should and do bless with heart-felt gratitude the power which, only by its stealing hand, has made me feel the lot of human nature.—Mr. Macqueen," continued she, "at the time I mention, was full of spirits, and performed the part of Autolicus. They made me take the character of the good Paulina. By thus mixing in the amusements of our children, we have added to their love and reverence perfect confidence and esteem, and find, when our presence is wanting, the diversion, let it be what it may, wants something to render it complete. They are now about acting the Gentle Shepherd. Several rehearsals have already taken place in our great barn, which is the theatre. On these occasions, one of my sons leads the band, another paints the scene, and Colin, your rejected partner, acts the part of prompter." Here this conversation, so pleasing to Amanda and interesting to Mrs. Macqueen, was interrupted by a message from the drawing-room, to inform the latter the rubber was over, and a new set wanted to cut in.

"I will return as soon as possible," said Mrs. Macqueen, as she was quitting her seat. If Amanda had not dreaded the looks of lady Martha almost as much as those of lord Mortimer or lady Araminta, she would have followed her to the drawing-room. As this was the case, she resolved on remaining in her present situation. It was some time ere she was observed by the young Macqueens. At last miss Macqueen came over to her: "I declare," said she, "you look so sad and solitary, I wish you could be prevailed upon to dance; do try this—it is a very fine, , and take Flora for your partner, who, you see, has sat in a corner, quite decomposed, since she lost her partner, and by the next set Colin will be disengaged."

Amanda declared she could not dance, and miss Macqueen being called to her place at the instant, she was again left to herself: miss Macqueen, however, conti-

nued to come and chat with her, whenever she could do so without losing any part of the dance. At last lord Mortimer followed her. The eyes of Amanda were involuntarily bent to the ground when she saw him approach: "You are an absolute runaway," cried he to miss Macqueen; "how do you suppose I will excuse your frequent desertions?"

"Why, miss Donald is so lonesome," said she.

"See," cried he, with quickness, "your sister beckons you to her; suffer me (taking her hand) to lead you to her."

Amanda looked up as they moved from her, and saw lord Mortimer's head half turned back; but the instant she perceived him he averted it, and took no farther notice of her. When the set was finished miss Macqueen returned to Amanda, and was followed by some of her brothers and sisters: some of the gentlemen also approached Amanda, and requested the honour of her hand, but she was steady in refusing all. Rich wines, sweetmeats, and warm lemonade, were now handed about in profusion, and the strains of the violin were succeeded by those of the bagpipe, played by the family musician, venerable in his appearance, and habited in the ancient Highland dress; with as much satisfaction to himself as his Scotch auditors, he played a lively Scotch reel, which in a moment brought two of the miss Macqueens and two gentlemen forward, and they continued this dance till politeness induced them to stop, that one might be begun, in which the rest of the party could join. Dancing continued in this manner with little intermission, but whenever there was an interval the young Macqueens paid attention to Amanda, and on her expressing her admiration of the Scotch music, made it a point that she should mention some favourite airs that they might be played for her: but these airs, the lively dance, the animated conversation, and the friendly attentions paid her, could not remove her dejection, and with truth they might have said,

That nothing could a charm impart
To soothe the stranger's wo.

The entrance of Mrs. Macqueen was the signal for the dance being ended. She made the young people sit down to refresh themselves before supper, and apologized to Amanda for not returning to her; but said lady Martha Dormer had engaged her in a conversation which she would not interrupt. At last they were summoned to supper, which, on Mr. Macqueen's account, was laid out in a room on the same floor; thither, without ceremony, whoever was next the door first proceeded. Mr. Macqueen was already seated at the table in his arm chair, and lady Martha Dormer on his right hand; the eldest son was deputed to do the honours of the foot of the table; the company was chequered, and Amanda found herself seated between Lord Mortimer and Mr. Colin Macqueen; and in conversing with the latter, Amanda sought to avoid noticing or being noticed by lord Mortimer; and his lordship, by the particular attention which he paid miss Macqueen, who sat on his other side, appeared actuated by the same wish. The sports of the morning had furnished the table with a variety of the choicest wild fowl, and the plenty and beauty of the confectionary denoted at once the hospitable spirit and elegant taste of the mistress of the feast; gaiety presided at the board, and there was scarcely a tongue, except Amanda's, which did not utter some lively sally; the piper sat in the lobby, and if his strains were not melodious, they were at least cheerful. In the course of the supper, lord Mortimer was compelled to follow the universal example of drinking Amanda's health; obliged to turn her looks to him, oh! how did her heart shrink at the glance, the expressive glance of his eye, as he pronounced miss Donald; unconscious whether she had noticed in this unusual manner his distressing compliment, she abruptly turned to young Macqueen, and addressed some scarcely articulate question to him. The supper-things removed, the strains of the piper were silenced, and toasts, songs, and sentiments succeeded. Old Mr. Macqueen set the example by a favourite Scotch air, and then called upon his next neighbour. Between the songs toasts were called for.

At last it came to lord Mortimer's turn. Amanda suddenly ceased speaking to young Macqueen. She saw the glass of lord Mortimer filled, and, in the next moment, heard the name of lady Euphrasia Sutherland. A feeling like wounded pride stole into the soul of Amanda: she did not decline her head as before, and she felt a faint glow upon her cheek. The eyes of lady Martha and lady Araminta she thought directed to her, with an expressive meaning. "They think," cried she, "to witness mortification and disappointment in my looks, but they shall not (if indeed they are capable of enjoying such a triumph) have it."

At length she was called upon for a song. She declined the call; but Mr. Macqueen declared, except assured she could not sing, she should not be excused. This assurance, without a breach of truth, she could not give: she did not wish to appear ungrateful to her kind entertainers, or unsocial, in the midst of mirth, by refusing what she was told would be pleasing to them and their company; she also wished, from a sudden impulse of pride, to appear cheerful in those eyes she knew were attentively observing her, and therefore, after a little hesitation, consented to sing. The first song which occurred to her was a little simple, but pathetic air, which her father used to delight in, and which lord Mortimer more than once had heard from her; but, indeed, she could recollect no song which at some time or other she had not sung for him. The simple air she had chosen seemed perfectly adapted to her soft voice, whose modulations were inexpressibly affecting. She had proceeded through half the second verse when her voice began to falter: the attention of the company became, if possible, more fixed; but it was a vain attention—no rich strain of melody repaid it, for the voice of the songstress had totally ceased. Mrs. Macqueen, with the delicacy of a susceptible mind, feared increasing her emotion by noticing it, and, with a glance of her expressive eye, directed her company to silence. Amanda's eyes were bent to the ground. Suddenly a glass of water was presented to her by a trembling hand, by

the hand of Mortimer himself. She declined it with a motion of her's, and, reviving a little, raised her head. Young Macqueen then gave her an entreating whisper to finish her song; she thought it would look like affectation to require farther sollicitation, and, faintly smiling, again began in strains of liquid melody—strains that seemed to breathe the very spirit of sensibility, and came over each attentive ear

Like a sweet sound
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.

The plaudits she received for her singing gave to her cheeks such a faint tinge of red as is seen in the bosom of the wild rose. She was now authorized to call for a song, and, as if doomed to experience cause for agitation, lord Mortimer was the person from whom, in the rotation of the table, she was to claim it. Thrice she was requested to do this ere she could obey. At last she raised her eyes to his face, which was now turned towards her, and she saw in it a confusion equal to that she herself trembled under. Pale and red by turns, he appeared to her to wait in painful agitation for the sound of her voice; her lips moved, but she could not articulate a word. Lord Mortimer bowed, as if he had heard what they would have said, and then turning abruptly to miss Macqueen, began speaking to her.

“Come, come, my lord,” said Mr. Macqueen, “we must not be put off in this manner.”

Lord Mortimer laughed, and attempted to rally the old gentleman; but he seemed unequal to the attempt, for, with a sudden seriousness, declared his inability of complying with the present demand: all further sollicitation on the subject was immediately dropped. In the round of toasts they forgot not to call upon Amanda for one. If she had listened attentively when lord Mortimer was about giving one, no less attentively then did he now listen to her. She hesitated a moment, and then gave a Charles Bingley. After the toast had past, “Sir Charles

Bingley!" repeated miss Macqueen, leaning forward, and speaking across lord Mortimer, "oh! I recollect him very well; his regiment was quartered some years ago at a little fort, some distance from this, and I remember his coming with a shooting party to the mountains, and sleeping one night here: we had a delightful dance that evening, and all thought him a charming young man. Pray, are you well acquainted with him?"

"Yes—No"—replied Amanda.

"Ah! I believe you are a sly girl," cried miss Macqueen, laughing. "Pray, my lord, does not that blush declare miss Donald guilty?"

"We are not always to judge from the countenance," said he, darting a penetrating, yet quickly withdrawn glance at Amanda. "Experience," continued he, "daily proves how little dependence is to be placed on it." Amanda turned hastily away, and pretended, by speaking to young Macqueen, not to notice a speech she knew directly pointed at her; for often had lord Mortimer declared, that, "in the lineaments of the human face divine each passion of the soul might well be traced."

Miss Macqueen laughed, and said, "she always judged of the countenance, and that her likings and dislikings were always the effect of first sight."

The company broke up soon after this, and much earlier than the usual hour, on account of the travellers. All but those then immediately belonging to the family having departed, some maids of the house appeared, to show the ladies to their respective chambers. Lady Martha and Araminta retired first; Amanda was following them, when Mrs. Macqueen detained her to try and prevail on her to stay two or three days along with them. The miss Macqueens joined their mother, but Amanda assured them she could not comply with their request, though she felt with gratitude its friendly warmth. Old Mr. Macqueen had his chair turned to the fire, and his sons and lord Mortimer were surrounding it. "Well, well," said he, calling Amanda to him, and taking her hand, "if you will not stay with us now, remember, on your return we shall lay an embargo on

you ; in the mean time I shall not lose the privilege which my being an old married man gives me." So saying, he gently pulled Amanda to him, and kissed her cheek. She could only smile at this innocent freedom, but she attempted to withdraw her hand to retire. "Now," said Mr. Macqueen, still detaining it, "are all these young men half mad with envy !" The young Macqueens joined in their father's gallantry, and not a tongue was silent except lord Mortimer's : his head rested on his hand, and the cornice of the chimney supported his arm ; his hair, from which the dancing had almost shaken all the powder, hung negligently about his face, adding to its paleness and sudden dejection. One of the young Macqueens, turning from his brothers, who were yet continuing their mirth with their father, addressed some questions to his lordship, but received no answer. Again he repeated it. Lord Mortimer then suddenly started, as if from a profound reverie, and apologized for his absence.

"Ay, ay, my lord," exclaimed old Mr. Macqueen, jocosely, "we may all guess where your lordship was then travelling in idea—a little beyond the mountains, I fancy ; ay, we all know where your heart and your treasure now lie."

"Do you ?" said lord Mortimer, with a tone of deep dejection and a heavy sigh—with an air also which seemed to declare him scarcely conscious of what he said. He recollected himself, however, at the instant, and began rallying himself, as the surest means of preventing others doing so. The scene was too painful to Amanda ; she hastily withdrew her hand, and, faintly wishing the party a good night, went out to the maid, who was waiting for her in the lobby, and was conducted to her room. She dismissed the servant at the door, and, throwing herself into a chair, availed herself of solitude to give vent to the tears whose painful suppression had so long tortured her heart. She had not sat long in this situation, when she heard a gentle tap at the door. She started, and, believing it to be one of the miss Macqueens, hastily wiped away the tears, and

opened the door. A female stranger appeared at it, who, curtesying respectfully, said, "Lady Martha Dormer, her lady, desired to see miss Donald for a few minutes, if not inconvenient to her."

"See me!" repeated Amanda, with the utmost surprise, "can it be possible!" She suddenly checked herself, and said, "she would attend her ladyship immediately." She accordingly followed the maid, a variety of strange ideas crowding upon her mind. Her conductress retired as she shut the door of the room into which she showed Amanda: it was a small anti-chamber, adjoining the apartment lady Martha was to lie in. Here, with increasing surprise, she beheld lord Mortimer, pacing the room in an agitated manner. His back was to the door as she entered; but he turned round with quickness, approached, looked on her for a few minutes, then, striking his hand suddenly against his forehead, turned from her with an air of distraction.

Lady Martha, who was sitting at the head of the room, and only bowed as Amanda entered it, motioned for her to take a chair; a motion Amanda gladly obeyed, for her trembling limbs could scarcely support her.

All was silent for a few minutes; lady Martha then spoke in a grave voice:—"I should not, madam, have taken the liberty of sending for you at this hour, but that I believed so favourable an opportunity would not again have occurred of speaking to you, on a subject particularly interesting to me—an opportunity which has so unexpectedly saved me the trouble of trying to find you out, and the necessity of writing to you."

Lady Martha paused, and her silence was not interrupted by Amanda.—"Last summer," continued lady Martha—again she paused: the throbbings of Amanda's heart became more violent. "Last summer," said she again, "there were some little gifts presented to you by lord Mortimer; from the events which followed their acceptance, I must presume they are valueless to you; from the events about taking place, they are of

importance elsewhere." She ceased, but Amanda could make no reply.

"You cannot be ignorant," said lady Martha, with something of severity in her accent, as if offended by the silence of Amanda, "you cannot be ignorant, I suppose, that it is the picture and ring I allude to; the latter, from being a family one of a particular value, I always destined for the wife of lord Mortimer; I therefore claim it in my own name. The picture I have his lordship's approbation and authority to demand—and, to convince you I have indeed, if such a conviction be necessary, have prevailed on him to be present at this conversation."

"No, madam, such a conviction was not necessary," cried Amanda—"I should——." She could utter no more at the moment, yet tried to suppress the agonizing feelings that tumultuously heaved her bosom.

"If not convenient to restore them immediately," said lady Martha, "I will give you a direction where they may be left, in London, to which place Mr. Macqueen has informed me you are going."

"It is perfectly convenient now to restore them, madam," replied Amanda, with a voice perfectly recovered, animated with conscious innocence and offended pride, which also gave her strength. "I shall return," continued she, moving to the door, "with them immediately to your ladyship."

The picture was suspended from her neck, and the ring, in its case, lay in her pocket; but, by the manner in which they had been asked, or rather demanded from her, she felt, amidst the anguish of her soul, a sudden emotion of pleasure that she could directly give them back; yet when, in her own room, she hastily untied the picture from her neck, pulled the black ribband from it, and laid it in its case, her grief overcame every other feeling, and a shower of tears fell from her.—"Oh, Mortimer! dear Mortimer!" she sighed, "must I part even with this little shadow! Must I retain no vestige of happier hours! Yet why, why should I wish to retain it, when the original will be so soon another's?"

Yes, if I behold Mortimer again, it will be as the husband of lady Euphrasia."

She recollected she was staying beyond the expected time, and wiped away her tears; yet still she lingered a few minutes in her chamber, to try and calm her agitation. She called her pride to her aid; it inspired her with fortitude, and she proceeded to lady Martha, determined that lady should see nothing in her manner which she could possibly construe into weakness or meanness.

Never did she appear more interesting than at the moment she re-entered the apartment. The passion she had called to her aid gave a bright glow to her cheeks, and the traces of the tears she had been shedding appeared upon those glowing cheeks like dew on the silken leaves of the rose, ere the sun-beams of the morning have exhaled it. Those tears left a humid lustre in her eyes, even more interesting than their wonted brilliancy. Her hair hung in rich and unrestrained luxuriance, for she had thrown off her hat on first going to her chamber, and gave to the beauty of her face and the elegance of her form a complete finishing.

"Here, madam, is the ring," cried she, presenting it to lady Martha, "and here is the picture," she would have added, but her voice faltered, and a tear started from her eye: determined to conceal, if possible, her feelings, she hastily dashed away the pearly fugitive. Lady Martha was again extending her hand, when lord Mortimer suddenly started from a couch on which he had thrown himself, and snatched the picture from the trembling hand that held it, pulled it from its case, and, flinging it on the floor, trampled it beneath his feet.— "Thus perish," exclaimed he, "every memento of my attachment to Amanda! Oh! wretched, wretched girl!" cried he, suddenly grasping her hand, and as suddenly relinquishing it. "Oh! wretched, wretched girl, you have undone yourself and me!" He turned abruptly away, and instantly quitted the room. Shocked by his words, and terrified by his manner, Amanda had just power to gain a chair. Lady Martha seemed also thun-

derstruck; but from the musing attitude in which she stood, the deep convulsive suffocating sobs of Amanda soon called her. She went to her, and, finding her unable to help herself, loosened her cravat, bathed her temples with lavender, and gave her water to drink. Those attentions, and the tears she shed, revived Amanda. She raised herself in her chair, on which she had fallen back, but was yet too much agitated to stand.

"Poor unhappy young creature!" said lady Martha, "I pity you from my soul. Ah! if your mind resembled your person, what a perfect creature had you been! How happy had then been my poor Mortimer!"

Now, now was the test, the shining test of Amanda's virtue, agonized by knowing she had lost the good opinion of those whom she loved with such ardour, esteemed with such reverence. She knew by a few words she could explain the appearances which had deprived her of his good opinion, and fully regain it, regain, by a few words, the love, the esteem of her valued, her inestimable Mortimer, the affection, the protection of his amiable aunt and sister. She leaned her head upon her hand; the weight on her bosom became less oppressive; she raised her head. "Of my innocence I can give such proofs," cried she— Her lips closed; a mortal paleness overspread her face; the sound of suicide seemed piercing through her ear; she trembled: the solemn, the dreadful declaration lord Cherbury had made of not surviving the disclosure of his secret—her promise of inviolably keeping it, both rushed upon her mind: she beheld herself on the very verge of a tremendous precipice, and about plunging herself and a fellow-creature into it, from whence, at the tribunal of her God, she should have to answer for accelerating the death of that fellow-creature: "and is it by a breach of faith," she asked herself, "I hoped to be re-established in the opinion of lord Mortimer and his relations?— Ah! mistaken idea! and how great is the delusion passion spreads before our eyes! even if their esteem could thus be regained, oh! what were that, or what the esteem, the plaudits of the world, if those of my own heart were gone for ever? Oh! never," cried she, still.

to herself, and raising her eyes to heaven, "oh! never may the pang of self-reproach be added to those which now oppress me!" her heart, at the moment, formed a solemn vow never, by any wilful act, to merit such a pang. "And oh! my God," she cried, "forgive thy weak creature, who, assailed by strong temptation, thought, for a moment, of wandering from the path of truth and integrity, which can alone conduct her to the region where peace and immortal glory will be hers."

Amanda, amidst her powerful emotions, forgot she was observed, except by that Being to whom she applied for pardon and future strength. Lady Martha had been a silent spectator of her emotions, and, thinking as she did of Amanda, could only hope they proceeded from contrition for her past conduct, forcibly awakened by reflecting on the deprivations it had caused her.

When she again saw Amanda able to pay attention, she addressed her: "I said I was sorry for witnessing your distress; I shall not repeat the expression, thinking as I now do; I hope that it is occasioned by regret for past errors; the tears of repentance wash away the stains of guilt, and that heart must indeed be callous, which the sigh of remorse will not melt to pity." Amanda turned her eyes with earnestness on lady Martha as she spoke, and her cheeks were again tinged with a faint glow.

"Perhaps I speak too plainly," cried lady Martha, witnessing this glow, and imputing it to resentment; "but I have ever liked the undisguised language of sincerity. It gave me pleasure," she continued, "to hear you had been in employment at Mrs. Duncan's; but that pleasure was destroyed, by hearing you were going to London, though to seek your brother, Mrs. Duncan has informed Mrs. Macqueen. If this were indeed the motive, there are means of inquiring without taking so imprudent a step."

"Imprudent!" repeated Amanda, involuntarily.

"Yes," cried lady Martha, "a journey so long, without a protector, to a young, I must add, a lovely woman, teems with danger from which a mind of delicacy

would shrink appalled. If, indeed, you go to seek your brother, and he regards you as he should, he would rather have you neglect him (though that you need not have done by staying with Mrs. Duncan) than run into the way of insults. No emergency in life should lead us to do an improper thing; as trying to produce good by evil is impious, so trying to produce pleasure by imprudence is folly; they are trials, however flatteringly they may commence, which are sure to end in sorrow and disappointment.

"You will," continued lady Martha, "if indeed anxious to escape from further censure than what has already befallen you, return to Mrs. Duncan, when I inform you (if indeed you are already ignorant of it) that colonel Belgrave passed this road, about a month ago, in his way from a remote part of Scotland to London, where he now is."

"I cannot help," said Amanda, "the misconstructions which may be put on my actions; I can only support myself under the pain they inflict by conscious rectitude."

"I am shocked, indeed, at the surmises entertained about me, and a wretch whom my soul abhorred from the moment it knew its real principles."

"If," said lady Martha, "your journey is really not prompted by the intention of seeing your brother, you heighten every other error by duplicity."

"You are severe, madam," exclaimed Amanda, in whose soul the pride of injured innocence was again reviving.

"If I probe the wound," cried lady Martha, "I would also wish to heal it; it is the wish I feel of saving a young creature from further error, of serving a being once so valued by him who possesses my first regard, that makes me speak as I now do. Return to Mrs. Duncan's; prove in one instance at least you do not deserve suspicion: she is your friend, and, in your situation, a friend is too precious a treasure to run the risk of losing it with her. As she lives retired, there will be little danger of your history or real name being discovered,

which I am sorry you dropped, let your motive for doing so be what it may, for the detection of one deception makes us suspect every other. Return, I repeat, to Mrs. Duncan's, and, if you want any inquiries made about your brother, dictate them, and I will take care they shall be made, and that you shall know their result." Had Amanda's motive for a journey to London been only to seek her brother, she would gladly have accepted of this offer; thus avoiding the imputation of travelling after Belgrave, or of going to join him—the hazard of encountering him in London, and the dangers of so long a journey; but the affair of the will required expedition and her own immediate presence—an affair the injunction of lady Dunreath had prohibited her disclosing to any one who could not immediately forward it, and which, if such an injunction never existed, she could not with propriety have divulged to lady Martha, who was so soon to be connected with a family so materially concerned in it, and in whose favour, on account of her nephew's connection with them, it was probable she might be biassed.

Amanda hoped and believed that, in a place so large as London, with her assumed name (which she now resolved not to drop till in a more secure situation), she should escape Belgrave. As to meeting him on the road, she had not the smallest apprehensions concerning that, naturally concluding that he never would have taken so long a journey as he had lately done, if he could have staid but a few weeks away: time, she trusted, would prove the falsity of the inference which she already was informed would be drawn from her perseverance in her journey. She told lady Martha that she thanked her for her kind offer, but must decline it, as the line of conduct she had marked out for herself rendered it unnecessary, whose innocence would yet be justified, she added. Lady Martha shook her head: the consciousness of having excited suspicions which she could not justify had indeed given to the looks of Amanda a confusion, when she spoke, which confirmed them in lady Martha's breast. "I am sorry for your

determination," said she ; " but, notwithstanding it is so contrary to my ideas of what is right, I cannot let you depart without telling you, that, should you at any time want or require services, which you would, or could not ask from strangers, or perhaps expect them to perform, acquaint me, and command mine ; yet, in doing justice to my own feelings, I must not do injustice to the noble ones of lord Mortimer ; it is by his desire, as well as my own inclination, I now speak to you in this manner, though past events and the situation he is about entering into must for ever preclude his personal interference in your affairs. He could never hear the daughter of captain Fitzalan suffered inconvenience of any kind, without wishing, without having her indeed, if possible, extricated from it."

" Oh ! madam," cried Amanda, unable to repress her gushing tears, " I am already well acquainted with the noble feelings of lord Mortimer, already oppressed with a weight of obligations." Lady Martha was affected by her energy ; her eyes grew humid, and her voice softened. " Error in you will be more inexcusable than others," cried lady Martha, " because, like too many unhappy creatures, you cannot plead the desertion of all the world ; to regret past errors, be they what they may, is to insure my assistance and protection, if both or either are at any time required by you : was I even gone, I should take care to leave a substitute behind me, who should fulfil my intentions towards you, and, by doing so, at once soothe and gratify the feelings of lord Mortimer."

" I thank you, madam," cried Amanda, rising from her chair, and, as she wiped away her tears, summoning all her fortitude to her aid, " for the interest you express about me ; the time may yet come, perhaps, when I shall prove I never was unworthy of exciting it, when the notice now offered from compassion may be tendered from esteem—then," continued Amanda, who could not forbear this justice to herself, " the pity of lady Martha Dormer will not humble, but exalt me, because then I shall know that it proceeds from that gene-

vous sympathy, which one virtuous mind feels for another in distress." She moved to the door. "How lamentable," said lady Martha, "to have such talents misapplied!"

"Ah! madam," cried Amanda, stopping, and turning mournfully to her, "I find you are inflexible."

Lady Martha shook her head, and Amanda had laid her hand upon the lock, when lady Martha said suddenly, "there were letters passed between you and lord Mortimer." Amanda bowed.

"They had better be mutually returned," said lady Martha. "Do you seal up his, and send them to lord Cherbury's house, in London, directed to me, and I pledge myself to have your's returned."

"You shall be obeyed, madam," replied Amanda, in a low broken voice, after the pause of a moment. Lady Martha then said she would no longer encroach upon her rest, and she retired.

In her chamber the feelings she had so long, so painfully tried to suppress, broke forth without again meeting opposition; the pride which had given her transient animation was no more, for, as past circumstances arose to recollection, she could not wonder at her being condemned from them. She no longer accused lady Martha in her mind of severity, no longer felt offended with her; but, oh! Mortimer, the bitter tears she shed fell not for herself alone, she wept to think thy destiny, though more prosperous, was not less unhappy than her own, for in thy broken accents, thy altered looks, she perceived a passion strong and sincere as ever for her, and well she knew lady Euphrasia not calculated to soothe a sad heart, or steal an image from it which corroded its felicity. Rest, after the incidents of the evening, was not to be thought of, but nature was exhausted, and insensibly Amanda sunk upon the bed, in a deep sleep, so insensibly, that, when she awoke, which was not till the morning was pretty far advanced, she felt surprised at her situation; she felt cold and unrefreshed from having lain in her clothes all night, and when she went to adjust her dress

at the glass, was surprised with the pallidness of her looks. Anxious to escape a second painful meeting, she went to the window to see if the chaise was come, but was disappointed on finding that she had slept at the back of the house; she heard no noise, and, concluding the family had not yet risen after the amusements of the preceding night, sat down by the window which looked into a spacious garden, above which rose romantic hills that formed a screen for some young and beautiful plantations that lay between them and the garden; but neither the misty tops of the hills, the varied trees which autumn spread over the plantations, nor the neat appearance of the garden, had power to amuse the imagination of Amanda! Her patience was exhausted after sitting some time, and, going to the door, she softly opened it, to try if she could hear any one stirring. She had not stood long, when the sound of footsteps and voices rose from below. She instantly quitted her room, and descended the stairs into a small hall, across which was a folding door: this she gently opened, and found it divided the hall she stood in from one that was spacious and lofty, and which her passing through the preceding night, before it was lighted up, had prevented her taking notice of; here, at a long table, were the men servants belonging to the family and the guests assembled at a breakfast, the piper at the head, like the king of the feast. Amanda stepped back the moment she perceived them, well knowing lord Mortimer's servants would recollect her, and was ascending the stairs to her room to ring for one of the maids, when a servant hastily followed her, and said the family were already in the breakfast room; at the same moment Mr. Colin Macqueen came from a parlour which opened in the little hall, and paying Amanda, in a lively and affectionate manner, the compliments of the morning, he led her to the parlour, where not only all the family guests who had lain in the house, but several gentlemen who had been with them the preceding night, were assembled.—Doctor Johnson has already celebrated a Scotch breakfast, nor was the one at which Mrs. Macqueen and her fair daughters presided,

inferior to any he had seen; besides chocolate, tea, and coffee, with the usual appendages, there were rich cakes, choice sweetmeats, and a variety of cold pastry, with ham and chickens, to which several of the gentlemen did honour: the dishes were ornamented with sweet herb and wild flowers, gathered about the feet of the mountains and in the valley, and by every guest was placed a fine bouquet from the green-house, with little French mottos on love and friendship about them, which, being opened and read, added to the mirth of the company.

"I was just going to send one of the girls for you," said Mrs. Macqueen, when Amanda had taken a place at the table, "and would have done so before, but wished you to get as much rest as possible, after your fatiguing journey."

"I assure you, madam," said Amanda, "I have been up this long time, expecting every moment a summons to the chaise."

"I took care of that last night," said Mrs. Macqueen, "for I was determined you should not depart at least without breakfasting." Amanda was seated between Mr. Colin Macqueen and his elder sister, and sought, by conversing with the former (for the latter was too much engrossed by the general gaiety to pay particular attention to any one) to avoid the looks she dreaded to see; yet the sound of lord Mortimer's voice affected her as much almost as his looks.

"Pray, lady Martha," said the second miss Macqueen, a lively thoughtless girl, "will your ladyship be so good as to guarantee a promise lord Mortimer has just made me, or rather, that I have extorted from him, which is the cause of this application?"

"You must first, my dear," answered lady Martha, "let me know what the promise is."

"Why, gloves and bridal favours; but most unwillingly granted, I can assure your ladyship." Amanda was obliged to set down the cup she was raising to her lips, and a glance stole involuntarily from her towards lord Mortimer, a glance instantly withdrawn when she saw

his eyes in the same direction. "I declare," continued miss Phoebe Macqueen, "I should do the favour all due honour."

"I am sure," cried lord Mortimer, attempting to speak cheerfully, "your acceptance of it would do honour to the presenter."

"And your lordship may be sure too," said one of her brothers, "it is a favour she would wish, with all her heart, to have an opportunity of returning."

"Oh! in that she would not be singular," said a gentleman.

"What do you think, miss Donald?" cried Colin Macqueen, turning to Amanda, "do you imagine she would not?" Amanda could scarcely speak; she tried however to hide her agitation, and, forcing a faint smile, with a voice nearly as faint, said, "that was not a fair question." The miss Macqueens took upon themselves to answer it, and Amanda, through their means, was relieved from farther embarrassment.

Breakfast over, Amanda was anxious to depart, and yet wanted courage to be the first to move; a charm seemed to bind her to the spot where, for the last time, she should behold lord Mortimer, at least the last time she ever expected to see him unmarried.

Her dread of her being late on the road, and she heard the destined stage for the night was at a great distance, at last conquered her reluctance to move, and she said to Mr. Colin Macqueen it was time for her to go. At that moment lord Mortimer rose, and proposed to the young Macqueens going with them to see the new plantations behind the house, which old Mr. Macqueen had expressed a desire his lordship should give his opinion of.

All the young gentlemen, as well as the Macqueens, Colin excepted, attended his lordship, nor did they depart without wishing Amanda a pleasant journey.

Silent and sad she continued in her chair, for some minutes after they quitted the room, forgetful of her situation, till the loud laugh of the miss Macqueens restored her to a recollection of it. She blushed, and, rising hastily, was proceeding to pay her farewell com-

pliments, when Mrs. Macqueen rising, drew her to the window, and in a low voice repeated her request for Amanda's company a few days. This Amanda again declined, but gratefully expressed her thanks for it, and the hospitality she had experienced. Mrs. Macqueen said, on her return to Scotland, she hoped to be more successful. She also added, that some of her boys and girls would gladly have accompanied Amanda a few miles on her way, had they not all agreed ere her arrival to escort lord Mortimer's party to an inn at no great distance, and take an early dinner with them. She should write that day, she said, to Mrs. Duncan, and thank her for having introduced to her family a person whose acquaintance was an acquisition. Amanda, having received the affectionate adieus of this amiable woman and her daughters, curtseyed, though with downcast looks, to lady Martha and lady Araminta, who returned her salutation with coolness.

Followed by two of the miss Macqueens, she hurried through the hall, from which the servants and their breakfast things were already removed; but how was she distressed when the first object she saw out-side the door was lord Mortimer, by whom stood Colin Macqueen, who had left the parlour to see if the chaise was ready, and one of his brothers; hastily would she have stepped forward to the chaise, had not the gallantry of the young men impeded her way; they expressed sorrow at her not staying longer amongst them; and hopes on her return she would.

"Pray, my lord," cried the miss Macqueens (while their brothers were thus addressing Amanda), "pray, my lord," almost in the same breath, "what have you done with the gentlemen?"

"You should ask your brother," he replied; "he has locked them up in the plantation." A frolic was at all times pleasing to the light-hearted Macqueens, and to enjoy the present one, off they ran directly, followed by their brothers, all calling as they ran to Amanda not to stir till they came back, which would be in a few minutes; but Amanda, from the awkward, the agita-

ting situation in which they had left her, would instantly have relieved herself, could she have made the postillion hear her; but, as if enjoying the race, he had gone to some distance to view it, and none of the servants of the house were near: conscious of her emotions she feared betraying them, and stepped a few yards from the door, pretending to be engrossed by the Macqueens; a heavy sigh suddenly pierced her ear. "Amanda," in the next moment, said a voice to which her heart vibrated. She turned with involuntary quickness, and saw lord Mortimer close by her. "Amanda," he repeated; then suddenly clasping his hands together, exclaimed, with an agonized expression, while he turned abruptly from her, "Gracious Heaven! what a situation! Amanda," said he again looking at her, "the scene which happened last night was distressing. I am now sorry on your account that it took place; notwithstanding past events I bear you no ill will; the knowledge of your uneasiness would give me pain; from my heart I forgive you all that you have caused, that you have entailed upon me; at this moment I could take you to my arms, and weep over you, like a fond mother over the lost darling of her hopes, tears of pity and forgiveness."

Amanda, unutterably affected, covered her face to hide the tears which bedewed it.

"Let me have the pleasure of hearing," continued lord Mortimer, "that you forgive the uneasiness and pain I might have occasioned you last night."

"Forgive!" repeated Amanda. "Oh! my lord," and her voice sunk in the sobs which heaved her bosom, "could I think you were, you would be happy." Lord Mortimer stopt, overcome by strong emotions.

"Happy!" repeated Amanda, "Oh! never—never," continued she, raising her streaming eyes to Heaven, "oh! never—never in this world!"

At this moment the Macqueens were not only heard but seen running back, followed by the gentlemen, whom they had been prevailed on to liberate. Shocked at the idea of being seen in such a situation, Amanda would have called the postillion; but he was

too far off to hear her weak voice, had she then even been able to exert that voice.—She looked towards him, however, with an expression which denoted the feelings of her soul.—Lord Mortimer, sensible of those feelings, hastily pulled open the door of the chaise, and taking the cold and trembling hand of Amanda, with one equally cold and trembling, assisted her into the chaise; then pressing the hand he held between both his, he suddenly let it drop from him, and closing the door without again looking at Amanda, called to the driver, who instantly obeyed the call, and had mounted ere the Macqueens arrived.—Oh! what a contrast did their looks, blooming with health and exercise, their gaiety, their protected situation, form to the wan, dejected, desolate Amanda! With looks of surprise they were going up to the chaise, when lord Mortimer, still standing by it, and anxious to save his unhappy lost Amanda the pain of being noticed in such agitation, gave the man a signal to drive off, which was instantly obeyed.

Thus did Amanda leave the mansion of the Macqueens, where sorrow had scarcely ever before entered without meeting alleviation; a mansion where the stranger, the way-faring man, and the needy, were sure of a welcome, cordial as benevolence and hospitality could give, and where happiness, as pure as in this sublunary state can be experienced, was enjoyed. As she drove from the door she saw the splendid equipages of lord Mortimer and lady Martha driving to it. She turned from them with a sigh, at reflecting they would soon grace the bridal pomp of lady Euphrasia. She pursued the remainder of her journey without meeting any thing worthy of relation. It was in the evening she reached London. The moment she stopped at the hotel she sent for a carriage, and proceeded in it to Mrs. Connel's, in Bond-Street.

CHAP. III.

Dissembling hope, her cloudy front she clears,
And a false vigour in her eyes appears.

DRYDEN.

SHE alighted from the carriage when it stopped at the door, and entered the shop, where, to her inexpressible satisfaction, the first object she beheld was miss Rushbrook sitting pensively at one of the counters. The moment she saw Amanda she recollected her, and starting up, exclaimed as she took her hand, "Ah! dear madam, this is indeed a joyful surprise! Ah! how often have I wished to meet you again to express my gratitude." The affectionate reception she met, and the unexpected sight of miss Rushbrook, seemed to promise Amanda, that her wishes relative to Rushbrook would not only be accelerated, but crowned with success. She returned the fervent pressure of miss Rushbrook's hand, and enquired after her parents; the enquiry appeared distressing, and she was answered with hesitation that they were indifferent; the evident embarrassment her question excited prevented her renewing it at this time. The mistress of the house was not present, and Amanda requested, if she was within, she might see her directly. Miss Rushbrook immediately stepped to a parlour behind the shop; and almost instantly returned, followed by the lady herself, who was a little fat Irish woman, past her prime, but not past her relish for the good things of this life: "Dear madam," said she, curtsying to Amanda, "you are very welcome; I protest I am very glad to see you, though I never had that pleasure but once before; but it is no wonder I should be so, for I have heard your praises every day since, I am sure, from that young lady, looking at miss Rushbrook. Amanda bowed, but her heart was

too full of the purpose of this visit to allow her to speak about any thing else. She was just come from the country, she told Mrs. Connel, where (she sighed as she spoke) she had left her friends, and, being unwilling to go amongst total strangers, she had come to her house in hopes of being able to procure lodgings in it.

"Dear ma'am," said Mrs. Connel, "I protest I should have been happy to have accommodated you, but at present my house is quite full."

The disappointment this speech gave Amanda rendered her silent for a moment, and she was then going to ask Mrs. Connel if she could recommend her to a lodging, when she perceived miss Rushbrook whispering her. "Why, madam," cried the former, who by a nod of her head seemed to approve of what the latter had been saying, "since you dislike so much going amongst strangers, which indeed shows your prudence, considering what queer kind of people are in the world, miss Emily says, that if you condescend to accept of part of her little bed, till you can settle yourself a little more comfortably in town, you shall be extremely welcome to it; and I can assure you I shall do every thing in my power to render my house agreeable to you."

"Oh! most joyfully, most thankfully, do I accept the offer," said Amanda, whose heart had sunk at the idea of going amongst strangers.—"Any place," she continued, speaking in the fullness of that agitated heart, "beneath so reputable a roof, would be an asylum of comfort I should prefer to a palace, if utterly unacquainted with the people who inhabited it." Her trunk was now brought in, and the carriage discharged. "I suppose, ma'am," said Mrs. Connel, looking at the trunk on which her assumed name was marked, "you are Scotch by your name, though indeed you have not much of the accent about you."

"I declare," cried Emily, also looking at it, "till this moment I was ignorant of your name."

Amanda was pleased to hear this, and resolved not to disclose her real one, except convinced Rushbrook would

interest himself in her affairs. She was conducted into the parlour, which was neatly furnished, and opened into a shop by a glass door. Mrs. Connel stirred a declining fire into a cheerful blaze, and desired to know if Amanda would choose any thing for dinner. "Speak the word only, my dear," said she, "and I think I can procure you a cold bone in the house. If you had come two hours sooner I could have given you a nice bit of veal for your dinner."—Amanda assured her she did not wish to take any thing till tea-time.

"Well, well," cried Mrs. Connel, "you shall have a snug cup of tea by and by, and a hot muffin with it. I am very fond of tea myself, though poor Mr. Connel, who is dead and gone, used often and often to say, I that was so nervous should never touch tea; but, Biddy, he would say, and he would laugh so, poor dear man, you and all your sex are like your mother Eve, unable to resist temptation."

Emily retired soon after Amanda entered; but returned in a few minutes with her hat and cloak on, and said, "Nothing but a visit she must pay her parents should have induced her to forego, for the first evening at least, the pleasure of miss Donald's society."

Amanda thanked her for her politeness, but assured her, if considered as a restraint, she would be unhappy.

"I assure you," said Mrs. Connel, as Emily departed, "she is very fond of you."

"I am happy to hear it," replied Amanda, "for I think her a most amiable girl."

"Indeed she is," cried the other; "all the fault I find with her is being too grave for her time of life. Poor thing, one cannot wonder at that however, considering the situation of her parents."

"I hope," interrupted Amanda, "it is not so bad as it was."

"Bad! Lord, it cannot be worse; the poor captain has been in gaol above a year."

"I am sorry," said Amanda, "to hear this: has any application been made to lady Greystock since his confinement?"

“ To lady Greystock ! why, lord, one might as well apply to one of the wild beasts in the Tower. Ah ! poor gentleman, if he was never to get nothing but what she gave him, I believe he would not long be a trouble to any one. It is now about fourteen years since my acquaintance with him first commenced. My poor husband, that is no more, and I kept a shop in Dublin, where the captain’s regiment was quartered, and he being only a lieutenant had not room enough for his family in the barracks, so he took lodgings at our house, where Mrs. Rushbrook lay in, and I being with her now and then during her confinement, a kind of friendship grew amongst us. They had not left us long to go to America, when a relation of my husband’s, who owned this house and shop, having lost his wife, and being lonesome, without either chick or child, invited us to come and live with him, promising us if we did to settle us in his business, and leave us every thing he had.—Well, such offers do not come every day, so to be sure we took him at his word, and here we had not been long when the poor man bid adieu to all mortal care, and was soon followed by Mr. Connel. Well, to be sure, I was sad and solitary enough ; but when I thought how irreligious it was to break one’s heart with grief, I plucked up my spirits, and began to hold up my head again ; so to make a short story of a long one, about six years ago Mrs. Rushbrook and miss Emily came one day into the shop to buy something, little thinking they should see an old friend : it was to be sure a meeting of joy and sorrow, as one may say ; we told all our griefs to each other, and I found things were very bad with the poor captain ; indeed I have a great regard for him and his family, and when he was confined I took Emily home as an assistant in my business ; the money she earned was to go to her parents, and I agreed to give her her clothes gratis ; but that would have gone but a little way in feeding so many mouths, had I not procured plain work for Mrs Rushbrook and her daughters. Emily is a very good girl indeed, and it is to see her parents she is now gone ; but while I am gabbling away I am sure the kettle is boil-

ing." So saying, she started up, and ringing the bell, took the tea-things from a beaufet where they were kept; the maid, having obeyed the well-known summons, then retired, and as soon as the tea was made, and the muffins buttered, Mrs. Connel made Amanda draw her chair close to the table, that she might, as she said, look snug, and drink her tea comfortably.

"I assure you, ma'am," cried she, "it was a lucky hour for miss Emily when she entered my house."

"I have no doubt of that," said Amanda.

"You must know, madam," proceeded Mrs. Connel, "about a month ago a gentleman came to lodge with me, who I soon found was making speeches to miss Emily; he was one of those wild looking sparks who, like Ranger in the play, look as if they would be popping through every one's doors and windows, and playing such tricks, as made poor Mr. Strickland so jealous of his wife. Well, I took my gentleman to task one day unawares: "So Mr. Siphthorpe," says I, "I am told you have cast a sheep's-eye upon one of my girls; but I must tell you she is a girl of virtue and family, so if you do not mean to deal honourably with her, you must either decamp from this, or speak to her no more." Upon this he made me a speech as long as a member of parliament's upon a new tax. "Lord! Mr. Siphthorpe," says I, "there is no occasion for all this oratory, a few words will settle the business between us." Well, this was coming close to the point you will say, and he told me then he always meant to deal honourably by miss Emily, and told me all about his circumstances, and I found he had a fine fortune, which indeed I partly guessed before from the appearance he made, and he said he would not only marry miss Emily, but take her parents out of prison, and provide for the whole family. Well, now comes the provoking part of my story: a young clergyman had been kind, at the beginning of their distress, to them, and he and miss Emily took it into their heads to fall in love with each other. Well, her parents gave their consent to their being married, which to be sure I thought a very foolish thing, know-

ing the young man's inability to serve them. To be sure he promised fair enough; but, Lord! what could a poor curate do for them, particularly when he got a wife and house full of children of his own I thought? so I supposed they would be quite glad to be off with him, and to give her to Mr. Siphthorpe: but no such thing, I assure you. When I mentioned it to them, one talked of honour, and another of gratitude, and as to Miss Emily, she fairly went into fits. Well, I thought I would serve them in spite of themselves, so, knowing the curate to be a romantic young fellow, I writes off to him, and tells him what a cruel thing it would be, if, for his own gratification, he kept Miss Emily to her word, and made her lose a match, which would free her family from all their difficulties, and in short I touched up his passion not a little, I assure you, and, as I hoped, a letter came from him, in which he told her he gave her up. Well, to be sure there was sad work when it came; with her I mean, for the Captain and his wife were glad enough of it I believe in their hearts; so at last every thing was settled for her marriage with Mr. Siphthorpe, and he made a number of handsome presents to her, I assure you, and they are to be married in a few days. He is only waiting for his rents in the country to take the Captain out of prison; but here is Miss Emily, instead of being quite merry and joyful, is as dull and as melancholy as if she was going to be married to a frightful old man."

"Consider," said Amanda, "you have just said her heart was pre-engaged."

"Lord!" cried Mrs. Connel, "a girl at her time of life can change her love as easily as her cap."

"I sincerely hope," exclaimed Amanda, "that she either has or may soon be able to transfer hers."

"And now, pray, Madam," said Mrs. Connel, with a look which seemed to say Amanda should be as communicative as she had been, "may I ask from whence you have travelled?"

"From a remote part of Scotland."

"Dear, what a long journey!—Lord! they say that

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is a very desolate place, Ma'am, without never a tree nor a bush in it."

"I assure you it wants neither shade nor verdure," replied Amanda. "Really; well, Lord, what lies some people tell! Pray, Ma'am, may I ask what country-woman you are?"

"Welch," said Amanda. "Really; well, I suppose Ma'am, you have had many a scramble up the mountains after the goats, which they say are marvellous plenty in that part of the world."

"No, indeed," replied Amanda. "Are you come to make any long stay in London, Ma'am?" "I have not determined." "I suppose you have come about a little business, Ma'am?" resumed Mrs. Connel. "Yes," replied Amanda. "To be sure, not an affair of great consequence, or so young a lady would not have undertaken it." Amanda smiled, but made no reply, and was at length relieved from these tiresome and inquisitive questions by Mrs. Connel's calling in her girls to tea; after which she washed the tea-things, put them into the beaufet, and left the room to order something for supper. Left to herself, Amanda reflected that at the present juncture of Rushbrook's affairs, when his attention and time were engrossed by the approaching settlement of his daughter, an application to him on her account would be not only impertinent but unavailing; she therefore determined to wait till the hurry and agitation produced by such an event had subsided, and most sincerely did she hope that it might be productive of felicity to all. Mrs. Connel was not long absent, and Emily returned almost at the moment she re-entered the room. "Well, Miss," said Mrs. Connel, addressing her ere she had time to speak to Amanda, "I have been telling your good friend here all about your affairs."

"Have you, Ma'am?" cried Emily, with a faint smile, and a dejected voice. Amanda looked earnestly in her face, and saw an expression of the deepest sadness in it. From her own heart she readily imagined what her feelings must be at such a disappointment as Mrs. Connel had mentioned, and felt the sincerest pity for her.

Mrs. Connel's volubility tormented them both; supper happily terminated it, as she was then much better employed, in her own opinion, than she could possibly have been in talking. Amanda pleaded fatigue for retiring early. Mrs. Connel advised her to try a few glasses of wine as a restorative; but she begged to be excused, and was allowed to retire with Emily. The chamber was small, but neat, and enlivened by a good fire, to which Amanda and Emily sat down while undressing. The latter eagerly availed herself of this opportunity to express the gratitude of her heart. Amanda tried to change the discourse, but could not succeed. "Long, madam," continued Emily, "have we wished to return our thanks for a benefaction so delicately conveyed as yours, and happy were my parents to-night when I informed them I could now express their grateful feelings."

"Though interested exceedingly in your affairs," said Amanda, making another effort to change the discourse, "be assured I never should have taken the liberty of inquiring minutely into them; and I mention this, lest you might suppose, from what Mrs. Connel said, that I had done so."

"No, madam," replied Emily, "I had no such idea, and an inquiry from you would be rather pleasing than otherwise, because I should then flatter myself you might be induced to listen to griefs which have long wanted the consolation of sympathy; such, I am sure, as they would receive from you."

"Happy should I be," cried Amanda, "had I the power of alleviating them."

"Oh! madam, you have the power," said Emily, "for you would commiserate them, and commiseration from you would be balm to my heart; you would strengthen me in my duties, you would instruct me in resignation; but I am selfish in desiring to intrude them on you."

"No," replied Amanda, taking her hand; "you flatter me by such a desire."

“Then, madam, whilst you are undressing, I will give myself the melancholy indulgence of relating my little story.”

Amanda bowed, and Emily thus began.

CHAP. IV.

Take heed, take heed, thou lovely maid,
Nor be by glittering ills betray'd.

“**T**O open our hearts to those we know will commiserate our sorrows is the sweetest consolation those sorrows can receive; to you, then, madam, I divulge mine, sure at least of pity. At the time I first had the happiness of seeing you, the little credit my father had was exhausted, and his inability to pay being well known, he was arrested one evening as he sat by the bed-side of my almost expiring mother! I will not pain your gentle nature by dwelling on the horrors of that moment, on the agonies of a parent and a husband torn from a family so situated as was my father's; feeble, emaciated, without even sufficient clothing to guard him from the inclemency of the weather, he leaned upon the arm of one of the bailiffs, as he turned his eyes from that wife he never more expected to behold. She fainted at the moment he left the room, and it was many minutes ere I had power to approach her. The long continuance of her fit at length recalled my distracted thoughts; but I had no restoratives to apply, no assistance to recover her, for my eldest brother had followed my father, and the rest of the children, terrified by the scene they had witnessed, wept together in a corner of the room. I had at last recollected a lady, who lived nearly opposite to us, and from whom I hoped to procure some relief for her: nothing but the present emergency could have made me apply to

her, for the attention she had paid us on first coming to Mr. Heathfield's was entirely withdrawn after his death. Pride, however, was forgotten at the present moment, and I flew to the house. The servant showed me into a parlour, where she, her daughters, and a young clergyman I had never before seen, were sitting at tea. I could not bring myself to mention my distress before a stranger, and accordingly begged to speak to her in another room; but she told me, in a blunt manner, I might speak there. In a low and faltering voice, which sighs and tears often impeded, I acquainted her of what had happened, the situation of my mother, and requested a cordial for her. How great was my confusion when she declared aloud all I had told her, and turning to her daughter, bid her give me part of a bottle of wine. "Ay, ay," cried she, "I always thought things would turn out so; it was really very foolish of Mr. Heathfield to bring you to his house, and lead you all into such expences!" I listened to no more, but, taking the wine, with a silent pang retired.

"I had not been many minutes returned, and was kneeling by the bed-side of my mother, who began to show some symptoms of returning life, when a gentle knock came to the hall door: I supposed it my brother, and bid one of the children fly to open it. What was my surprize when in a few minutes she returned, followed by the young clergyman I had just seen! I started from my kneeling posture, and my looks expressed my wonder. He approached, and, in the soft accent of benevolence, apologized for his intrusion; but said, he came with a hope and a wish that he might be serviceable. Oh! how soothing were his words! oh! how painfully pleasing the voice of tenderness to the wretched! The tears which pride and indignation had suspended but a few moments before, again began flowing.

"But I will not dwell upon my feelings; suffice it to say, that every attention which could mitigate my wretchedness he paid, and that his efforts, aided by mine, soon restored my mother. His looks, his manner, his profession, all conspired to calm her spirits, and she

blessed the power which so unexpectedly gave us a friend. My brother returned from my father merely to inquire how we were, and to go back to him directly. The stranger requested permission to accompany him; a request most pleasing to us, as we trusted his soothing attention would have the same effect upon his sorrowing heart as it had upon ours. Scarcely had he gone ere a man arrived from a neighbouring hotel with a basket loaded with wine and provisions; but to enumerate every instance of this young man's goodness would be encroaching upon your patience; in short, by his care my mother in a few days was able to be carried to my father's prison. Mrs. Connel, who, on the first intimation of our distress, had come to us, took me into her house, at a stated salary, which was to be given to my parents, and the rest of the children were to continue with them. My mother desired me one evening to take a walk with the children to Kensington, as she thought them injured by constant confinement. Our friend attended us, and in our way thither informed me that he must soon leave town, as he was but a country curate, and his leave of absence from his rector was expired: it was above a month since we had known him, during which time his attentions were unremitting, and he was a source of comfort to us all. A sudden chill came over my heart as he spoke, and every sorrow at that moment seemed aggravated. On entering Kensington gardens, I seated myself on a little rising mount, for I felt trembling and fatigued, and he sat beside me. Never had I before felt so oppressed, and my tears gushed forth in spite of my efforts to restrain them. Something I said of their being occasioned by the recollection of the period when my parents enjoyed the charming scene I now contemplated along with me. "Would to heaven," cried he, "I could restore them to the enjoyment of it!"

"Ah!" said I, "they already lie under unreturnable obligations to you; in losing you," added I, involuntarily, "they will lose their only comfort."

"Since, then," cried he, "you flatter me by saying it is in my power to give them comfort, oh! let them

have a constant claim upon me for it. Oh! Emily," he continued, taking my hand, "let them be my parents as well as your's; then will their too scrupulous delicacy be conquered, and they will receive as a right what they now consider as a favour." I felt my cheeks glow with blushes, but still did not perfectly conceive his meaning. "My destiny is humble," he continued; "was it otherwise, I should long since have entreated you to share it with me; could you be prevailed on to do so, you would give it pleasures it never yet experienced." He paused for a reply, but I was unable to give one.

"Ah! Madam, how little necessity either was there for one! my looks, my confusion, betrayed my feelings. He urged me to speak, and at last I acknowledged I should not hesitate to share his destiny, but for my parents, who by such a measure would lose my assistance." "Oh do not think," cried he, "I would ever wish to tempt you into any situation which should make you neglect them." He then proceeded to say, "that though unable, at present, to liberate them, yet he trusted that, if they consented to our union, he should, by economy, be enabled to contribute more essentially to their support than I could do, and also be able in a short time to discharge their debts." His proposals were made known to them, and met their warmest approbation. The pleasure they derived from them was more on my account than their own, as the idea of having me so settled removed a weight of anxiety from their minds: some of my brothers and sisters should live with us, he said, and promised my time should be chiefly spent in doing fine works, which should be sent to Mrs. Connel to dispose of for my parents, and also that, from time to time, I should visit them, till I had the power of bringing them to my cottage, for such he described his residence.

"He was compelled to go to the country, but it was settled he should return in a short time, and have every thing finally settled. In about a week after his departure, as I was returning one morning from a lady's

where I had been on a message from Mrs. Connel, a gentleman joined me in the street, and, with a rude familiarity, endeavoured to enter into conversation with me. I endeavoured to shake him off, but could not succeed, and hastened home with the utmost expedition, whither I saw he followed me. I thought no more of the incident, till about two days after I saw him enter the shop, and heard him enquire of Mrs. Connel about her lodgings, which to my great mortification he immediately took, for I could not help suspecting he had some improper motive for taking them. I resolved, however, if such a motive really existed, to disappoint it by keeping out of his way : but all my vigilance was unavailing, he was continually on the watch for me, and I could not go up or down stairs without being insulted by him. I at length informed Mrs. Connel of his conduct, and entreated her to fulfil the sacred trust her friends reposed in her, when they gave me to her care, by terminating the insults of Mr. Siphthorpe. Alas! could I have possibly foreseen the consequences that would have followed my application to her, I should have borne those insults in silence. She has already informed you of them. Oh! Madam, when the letter came, which dissolved a promise so cheerfully, so fondly given, every prospect of felicity was in a moment overshadowed! For a long time I resisted every effort that was made to prevail on me to marry Siphthorpe ; but when at last my mother said she was sorry to find my feelings less than his, who had so generously resigned me that my father might be extricated from his difficulties, I shrunk with agony at the rebuke. I wondered, I was shocked, how I could have so long hesitated to open the prison gates of my father, and determined from that moment to sacrifice myself for him ; for oh ! miss Donald, it is a sacrifice of the most dreadful nature I am about making. Siphthorpe is a man I never could have liked, had my heart even been disengaged."

Amanda felt the truest pity for her young friend, who ended her narrative in tears : but she did not, by yielding entirely to that pity (as too many girls, with tender

hearts, but weak heads, might have done), heighten the sorrow of Miss Rushbrook. She proved her friendship and sympathy more sincerely than she could have done by mere expressions of condolence, which feed the grief they commiserate, in trying to reconcile her to a destiny that seemed irrevocable: she pointed out the claims a parent had upon a child, and dwelt upon the delight a child experienced when conscious of fulfilling those claims. She spoke of the rapture attending the triumph of reason and humanity over self and passion; and mentioned the silent plaudits of the heart as superior to all gratification, or external advantages. She spoke from the real feelings of her soul; she recollected the period at which, to a father's admonition, she had resigned a lover, and had that father been in captain Rushbrook's situation, and the same sacrifice been demanded from her as from Emily, she felt, without hesitation, she would have made it. She was indeed a mistress that had practised, and would practise (was there a necessity for so doing) the lessons she gave, not as poor Ophelia says,

Like some ungracious pastors,
 Who show the steep and thorny path to heav'n,
 But take the primrose one themselves.

The sweet consciousness of this gave energy and more than usual eloquence to her language; but, whilst she wished to inspire her young friend, she felt, from the tenderness of her nature, and the sad situation of her own heart, what the friend must feel from disappointed affection and a reluctant union. Scarcely could she refrain from weeping over a fate so wretched, and which she was tempted to think as dreadful as her own; but a little reflection soon convinced her she had the sad pre-eminence of misery, for in her fate there was none of those alleviations as in Emily's, which she was convinced must, in some degree, reconcile her to it; her sufferings, unlike Emily's, would not be rewarded by knowing that they contributed to the comfort of those dearest to her heart.

"Your words, my dear Madam," said Emily, "have calmed my spirits; henceforth I will be more resolute in trying to banish regrets from my mind; but I have been inconsiderate to a degree in keeping you so long from rest after your fatiguing journey." Amanda indeed appeared at this moment nearly exhausted, and gladly hastened to bed. Her slumbers were short and unrefreshing; the cares which clung to her heart when waking were equally oppressive whilst sleeping. Lord Mortimer mingled in the meditations of the morning, in the visions of the night, and when she awoke she found her pillow wet with the tears she had shed on his account. Emily was already up, but on Amanda's drawing back the curtain she laid down the book she was reading, and came to her. She saw she looked extremely ill, and imputing this to fatigue, requested she would breakfast in bed; but Amanda, who knew her illness proceeded from a cause which neither rest nor assiduous care could cure, refused complying with this request, and immediately dressed herself. As she stood at the toilet, Emily suddenly exclaimed, "If you have a mind to see Siphthorpe I will show him to you now, for he is just going out." Amanda went to the window, which Emily gently opened; but, oh! what was the shock of that moment, when in Siphthorpe she recognized the insidious Belgrave! A shivering horror ran through her veins, and, recoiling a few paces, she sunk half fainting on a chair. Emily, terrified by her appearance, was flying to the bell to ring for assistance, when, by a faint motion of her hand, Amanda prevented her. "I shall soon be better," said she, speaking with difficulty; "but I will lie down on the bed for a few minutes, and I beg you may go to your breakfast." Emily refused to go, and entreated that, instead of leaving her, she might have breakfast brought up for them both. Amanda assured her she could take nothing at present, and wished for quiet: Emily therefore reluctantly left her. Amanda now endeavoured to compose her distracted thoughts, and quiet the throbbings of her agonized heart, that she might be able to arrange some plan for extricating her-

self from her present situation, which appeared replete with every danger to her imagination; for, from the libertine principles of Belgrave, she could not hope that a new object of pursuit would detach him from her, when he found her so unexpectedly thrown in his way; unprotected as she was, she could not think of openly avowing her knowledge of Belgrave; to discover his baseness required therefore caution and deliberation, lest in saving Emily from the snare spread for her destruction, she should entangle herself in it; to declare at once his real character must betray her to him, and though she might banish him from the house, yet, unsupported as she was by friends or kindred, unable to procure the protection of Rushbrook, in his present situation, however willing he might be to extend it, she trembled to think of the dangers to which, by thus discovering, she might expose herself; dangers which the deep treachery and daring effrontery of Belgrave would, in all probability, prevent her escaping. As the safest measure, she resolved on quitting the house in the course of the day; but without giving an intimation that she meant not to return to it. She recollected a place where there was a probability of her getting lodgings, which would be at once secret and secure; and by an anonymous letter to Captain Rushbrook, she intended to acquaint him of his daughter's danger, and refer him to Sir Charles Bingley, at whose agent's he could receive intelligence of him for the truth of what she said. Her plan concerted she grew more composed, and was able, when Emily entered the room with her breakfast, to ask, in a seeming careless manner, "when Mr. Siphthorpe was expected back?"

"It is very uncertain indeed," answered she.

"I must go out in the course of the day," said Amanda, "about particular business; I may therefore as well prepare myself at once for it." She accordingly put on her habit, and requested materials for writing from Emily, which were immediately brought, and Emily then retired till she had written her letter. Amanda, left to herself, hastily unlocked her little trunk, and

taking from thence two changes of linen, and the will and narrative of Lady Dunreath, she deposited the two former in her pocket, and the two latter in her bosom, then sat down and wrote the following letter to Captain Rushbrook.

“ A person who esteems the character of Captain Rushbrook, and the amiable simplicity of his daughter, cautions him to guard that simplicity against the danger which now threatens it, from a wretch, who, under the sacred semblance of virtue, designs to fix a sharper sting in the bosom of affliction than adversity ever yet implanted. The worth of Siphthorpe is not more fictitious than his name; his real one is Belgrave; his hand is already another's; and his character for many years past marked with instances of deceit, if not equal, at least little inferior to the present. For the truth of these assertions the writer of this letter refers Captain Rushbrook to Sir Charles Bingley, of ——— regiment, from whose agent a direction may be procured to him, certain, from his honour and sensibility, he will eagerly step forward to save worth and innocence from woe and destruction.”

Amanda's anxiety about Emily being equal to what she felt for herself, she resolved to leave this letter at Rushbrook's prison, lest any accident should happen if it went by other hands. She was anxious to be gone, but thought it better to wait till towards evening, when there would be the least chance of meeting Belgrave, who at that time would probably be fixed in some place for the remainder of the day. Emily returned in about an hour, and finding Amanda disengaged requested permission to sit with her. Amanda, in her present agitation, would have preferred solitude, but could not decline the company of the affectionate girl, who in conversing with her sought to forget the heavy cares which the dreadful idea of a union with Siphthorpe had drawn upon her. Amanda listened with a beating heart to every sound, but no intimation of Belgrave's return reached her ear. At length

they were summoned to dinner, but Amanda could not think of going to it, lest she should be seen by him. To avoid this risk, and also the particularity of a refusal, she determined immediately to go out, and, having told Emily her intention, they both descended the stairs together. Emily pressed her exceedingly to stay for dinner, but she positively refused, and left the house with a beating heart, without having answered Emily's question, who desired to know if she would not soon return. Thus perpetually threatened with danger, like a frightened bird, again was she to seek a shelter for her innocent head. She walked with quickness to Oxford-street, where she directly procured a carriage, but was so weak and agitated, the coachman was almost obliged to lift her into it. She directed it to the prison, and on reaching it sent for one of the turnkeys, to whom she gave her letter for Rushbrook, with a particular charge to deliver it immediately to him. She then ordered the carriage to Pall-Mall, where it may be remembered she had once lodged with lady Greystock. This was the only lodging-house in London she knew, and in it she expected no satisfaction but what would be derived from thinking herself safe, as its mistress was a woman of a most unpleasant temper. She had once been in affluent circumstances, and the remembrance of those circumstances soured her temper, and rendered her, if not incapable of enjoying, at least unwilling to acknowledge the blessings she yet possessed; on any one in her power she vented her spleen. Her chief pursuit was the gratification of a most insatiate curiosity, and her first delight, relating the affairs, good or bad, which that curiosity dived into. Amanda, finding she was at home, dismissed the coach, and was shown by the maid into the back parlour, where she sat. "Oh! dear!" cried she, with a supercilious smile, the moment Amanda entered, without rising from her chair to return her salute, "when did you return to London? and pray, may I ask, what brought you back to it?"

Amanda was now convinced from Mrs. Hansard's altered manner, who had once been servile to a degree to

her, that she was perfectly acquainted with her destitute condition, and a heavy sigh burst from her heart at the idea of associating with a woman who had the meanness to treat her ill because of that condition. A chillness crept through her frame when she reflected that her sad situation might long compel her to this. Sick, weak, exhausted, she sunk upon a chair, which she had neither been offered nor desired to take.

"Well, miss, and pray what is your business in town?" again asked Mrs. Hansard, with an increased degree of pertness.

"My business, madam," replied Amanda, "can be of no consequence to a person not connected with me. My business with you is to know whether you can accommodate me with lodgings." "Really; well, you might have paid me the compliment of saying you would have called at any rate to know how I did. You may guess how greatly flattered a humble being like me would be by the notice of so amiable a young lady."

These words were pronounced with a kind of sneer, that, by rousing the pride of Amanda, a little revived her spirits. "I should be glad, madam," said she, with a composed voice, while a faint glow stole over her cheek, "to know whether you can, or choose to accommodate me with lodgings?"

"Lord! my dear," replied Mrs. Hansard, "do not be in such a wondrous hurry; take a cup of tea with me, and then we will settle about that business." These words implied that she would comply with the wish of Amanda, and however disagreeable the asylum, yet to have secured one cheered her sinking heart. Tea was soon made, which to Amanda, who had touched nothing since breakfast, and but little then, would have been a pleasant refreshment, had she not been tormented and fatigued with the questions of Mrs. Hansard, who laid a thousand baits to betray her into a full confession of what had brought her to London. Amanda, though a stranger in herself to every species of art, from fatal experience, was aware of it in others, and therefore guarded her secret. Mrs. Hansard, who loved what she

called a gossiping cup of tea, sat a tedious time over the tea-table. Amanda at last, mortified and alarmed by some expressions which dropped from her, again ventured to ask if she could be lodged under her roof.

"Are you really serious in that question?" said Mrs. Hansard. There was a certain expression of contempt in her features as she spoke, which shocked Amanda so much that she had not power to reply: "because if you are, my dear," continued Mrs. Hansard, "you have more assurance than I thought you possessed of, though I always gave you credit for a pretty large share. Do you think I would ruin my house, which lodges people of the first rank and character, by admitting you into it; you who, it is well known, obtained lady Greystock's protection from charity, and lost it through misconduct? Poor lady, I had the whole story from her own mouth. She suffered well by having any thing to say to you. I always guessed how it would be: notwithstanding your demure look, I saw well enough how you would turn out. I assure you, to use your own words, if I could accommodate you in my house, it would not answer you at all, for there are no convenient closets in it, in which a lady of your disposition might now and then want to hide a smart young fellow. I advise you, if you have had a tiff with any of your friends, to make up the difference, though, indeed, if you do not, in such a place as London you can never be at a loss for such friends. Perhaps you are now beginning to repent of your evil courses, and, if I took you into my house, I should suffer as much in my pocket, I suppose, as in my character."

The terrified and distressed look with which Amanda listened to this speech would have stopped Mrs. Hansard in the middle of it, had she possessed a spark of humanity, even if she believed her (which was not the case) guilty; but lost to the noble, the gentle feelings of humanity, she exulted in the triumph of malice, and rejoiced to have an opportunity of piercing the panting heart of helpless innocence with the sharp darts of insult and unmerited reproach. Amidst the various shocks

Amanda had experienced in the short but eventful course of her life, one greater than the present she had never felt: petrified by Mrs. Hansard's words, it was some time ere she had power to speak. "Gracious heaven!" exclaimed she, looking up to that heaven she addressed, and which she now considered her only refuge from evil, "to what trials am I continually exposed? Persecuted, insulted, shocked! oh! what happiness to lay my feeble frame, my woe-struck heart, within that low asylum, where malice could no more annoy, deceit no more betray me! I am happy," she continued, starting up, and looking at Mrs. Hansard, "that the accommodation I desired in this house you refused me, for I am now well convinced, from my knowledge of your disposition, that the security my situation requires I should not have found within it." She hastily quitted the room, but on entering the hall her spirits entirely forsook her, at the dreadful idea of having no home to go to; overcome with horror, she sunk in a flood of tears upon one of the hall chairs. A maid, who had probably been listening to her mistress's conversation, now came from a front parlour, and, as Mrs. Hansard had shut the door after Amanda, addressed her without fear of being overheard. "Bless me! miss," said she, "are you crying? Why, lord! surely you will not mind what old blowsey in the parlour says? I promise you, if we minded her, we should have red eyes here every day in the week. Do, pray, miss, tell me if I can be of any service to you."

Amanda, in a voice scarcely articulate, thanked her, and said, "in a few minutes she should be better able to speak." To seek lodgings at this late hour was not to be thought of, except she wished to run into the very dangers she had wanted to avoid, and Mrs. Connel's house returned to her recollection, as the impossibility of procuring a refuge in any other was confirmed in her mind; she began to think it could not be so dangerous as her fears in the morning had represented it to be; ere this, she thought, Belgrave (for since the delivery of the letter there had been time enough for such a pro-

ceeding) might be banished from it; if not, she had a chance of concealing herself, and, even if discovered, she believed Mrs. Connel would protect her from his open insults, whilst she trusted her own precaution would, under Heaven, defeat his secret schemes, should he again contrive any; she therefore resolved, or rather necessity compelled her, for, could she have avoided it, she would not have done so, to return to Mrs. Connel's; she accordingly requested the maid to procure her a carriage, and rewarded her for her trouble. As she was returning to Mrs. Conne's, she endeavoured to calm her spirits, and quell her apprehensions. When the carriage stopped, and the maid appeared, she could scarcely prevent herself, ere she alighted, from inquiring whether any one but the family was within; conscious, however, that such a question might create suspicions, and that suspicions would naturally excite inquiries, she checked herself, and re-entered, though with trembling limbs, that house from whence in the morning she had fled with such terror.

 CHAP. V.

Why, thou poor-mourner, in what baleful corner
 Hast thou been talking with that witch, the night?
 On what cold stone hast thou been stretch'd along,
 Gathering the grumbling winds about thy head,
 To mix with their's the accents of thy woes?

OTWAY.

AMANDA had not reached the parlour when the door opened, and Mrs. Connel came from it. "Oh! oh! miss," cried she, "so you are returned; I protest I was beginning to think you had stolen a march upon us." There was a rude bluntness in the speech, which

confounded Amanda; and her mind misgave her that all was not right. "Come," continued Mrs. Connel, "come in, miss; I assure you I have been very impatient for your return." Amanda's fears increased. She followed Mrs. Connel in silence into the parlour, where she beheld an elderly woman, of a pleasing but emaciated appearance, who seemed in great agitation and distress. How she could possibly have any thing to say to this woman she could not conjecture; and yet an idea that she had, instantly darted into her mind; she sat down trembling in every limb, and waited with impatience for an explanation of this scene. After a general silence of a few minutes, the stranger, looking at Amanda, said, "My daughter, madam, has informed me we are indebted to your bounty; I am therefore happy at an opportunity of discharging the debt." These words announced Mrs. Rushbrook, but Amanda was confounded at her manner; its coldness and formality were more expressive of dislike and severity, than of gentleness or gratitude. Mrs. Rushbrook rose as she spoke, and offered a note to her. Speechless from astonishment, Amanda had not power either to decline or accept it, and it was laid on a table before her.

"Allow me, madam," said Mrs. Rushbrook, as she resumed her seat, "to ask if your real name is Donald?" Amanda's presentiment of underhand doings was now verified; it was evident to her, that their author was Belgrave, and that he had been too successful in contriving them.

Amanda now appeared to have reached the crisis of her fate: in all the various trials she had hitherto experienced she had still some stay, some hope, to support her weakness and sooth her sorrows: when groaning under the injuries her character sustained by the success of an execrable plot, she had the consolation to think an idolizing father would shelter her from farther insult; when deprived of that father, tender friends stepped forward, who mingled tears of sympathy with her's, and poured the balm of pity on her sorrowing heart; when torn from the beloved object enshrined within that heart;

while her sick soul languished under the heavy burthen of existence, again did the voice of friendship penetrate its gloom, and, though it could not remove, alleviated its sufferings; now helpless, unprotected, she saw a dreadful storm ready to burst over her devoted head, without one hope to cheer, one stretched-out arm to shield her from its violence; surrounded by strangers, prejudiced against her, she could not think that her plain unvarnished tale would gain their credence, or prevail on them to protect her from the wretch, whose machinations had ruined her in their estimation. The horrors of her situation, all at once assailing her mind, overpowered its faculties; a kind of mental sickness seized her; she leaned her throbbing head upon her hand, and a deep groan burst from her agonized heart.

"You see," said Mrs. Connel, after a long silence, "she cannot brave this discovery."

Amanda raised her head at these words; she had grown a little more composed. "The Being in whom I trust," she said to herself, "and whom I never wilfully offended, will still, I doubt not, as heretofore, protect me from danger." Mrs. Rushbrook's unanswered question still sounded in her ear. "Allow me, madam," she cried, turning to her, "to ask your reason for inquiring whether my real name is Donald?"

"Oh, lord! my dear," said Mrs. Connel, addressing Mrs. Rushbrook; "you need not pester yourself or her with any more questions about the matter, her question is an answer in itself"

"I am of your opinion, indeed," exclaimed Mrs. Rushbrook, "and think any farther inquiry needless."

"I acknowledge, madam," said Amanda, whose voice grew firmer from the consciousness of never having acted improperly, "that my name is not Donald. I must also do myself the justice to declare (let me be credited or not) that my real one was not concealed from any motive which could deserve reproach or censure. My situation is peculiarly distressing. My only consolation amidst my difficulties, is the idea of never having drawn them upon myself by imprudence."

"I do not want, madam," replied Mrs. Rushbrook, "to inquire into your situation; you have been candid in one instance, I hope you will be equally so in another. Pray, madam," handing to Amanda the letter she had written to Rushbrook, "is this your writing?"

"Yes, madam," answered Amanda, whose pride was pained by the contempt she met, "it is my writing."

"And pray," said Mrs. Rushbrook, looking stedfastly at her, while her voice grew more severe, "what was your motive for writing this letter?"

"I think, madam," cried Amanda, "the letter explains that."

"A pretty explanation truly!" exclaimed Mrs. Connel: "and so you would try to vilify the poor gentleman's character! But, miss, we have had an explanation you truly dream of; ay, we found you out, notwithstanding your slyness in writing like one of the madams in a novel; a bit of a letter without ever a name to it. Mr. Siphthorpe knew directly who it came from. Ah! poor gentleman, he allowed you wit enough, a pity there is not more goodness with it; he knows you very well, to his cost."

"Yes," said Amanda, "he knows I am a being whose happiness he disturbed, but whose innocence he never triumphed over. He knows that, like an evil genius, he has pursued my wandering footsteps, heaping sorrow upon sorrow on me by his machinations; but he also knows, when encompassed by those sorrows, perplexed by those machinations, I rose superior to them all, and with uniform contempt and abhorrence rejected his offers."

"Depend upon it," cried Mrs. Connel, "she has been an actress."

"Yes, madam," said Amanda, whose struggling voice confessed the anguish of her soul, "upon a stage where I have seen a sad variety of scenes."

"Come, come," exclaimed Mrs. Connel, "confess all about yourself and Siphthorpe; full confession will enable you to pardon."

"It behoves me, indeed," said Amanda, "to be explicit; my character requires it, and my wish," she continued, turning to Mrs. Rushbrook, "to save you from a fatal blow demands it." She then proceeded to relate every thing she knew concerning Belgrave; but she had the mortification to find her short and simple story received with every mark of incredulity. "Beware, madam," said she to Mrs. Rushbrook, "of this infatuation, I adjure you beware of the consequences of it; oh! doom not your innocent, your reluctant Emily to destruction; draw not upon your own head, by such a deed, horrible and excruciating anguish. Why does not Mr. Siphthorpe, if I must call him so, appear, and in my presence support his allegations?"

"I asked him to do so," replied Mrs. Rushbrook; "but he has feeling, and he wished not to see your distress, however merited it might be."

"No, madam," cried Amanda, "he refused, because he knew that without shrinking he could not behold the innocence he has so abused, because he knew the conscious colouring of his cheek would betray the guilty feelings of his soul. Again I repeat he is not what he appears to be. I refer you for the truth of my words to sir Charles Bingley. I feel for you, though you have not felt for me. I know, from false representations, you think me a poor misguided creature; but was I even so, my too evident anguish might surely have excited pity. Pardon me, madam, if I say your conduct has been most unkind; the gentle virtues are surely those best fitting a female breast; she that shows leniency to a fallen fellow-creature fulfils the divine precept; the tear she sheds over her frailties is consecrated in the sight of Heaven, and her compassion draws a blessing on her own head. Oh! madam, I once looked forward to a meeting with you, far, far different from the present one; I once flattered myself that from the generous friendship of Mr. and Mrs. Rushbrook, I should derive support and consolation; but this, like every other hope, is disappointed."—Amanda's voice fal-

tered at these last words, and tears again trickled down her lovely cheeks; a faint glow tinged the pale cheek of Mrs. Rushbrook at Amanda's accusation of unkindness; she bent her eyes to the ground as if conscious it was merited, and it was many minutes ere she could again look on the trembling creature before her. "Perhaps," said she at last, "I may have spoken too severely; but it must be allowed I had great provocation; friendship and gratitude could not avoid resenting such shocking charges as yours against Mr. Siphthorpe."

"For my part, I wonder you spoke so mildly to her," exclaimed Mrs. Connel: "I protest in future I shall be guarded who I admit into my house. I declare she seemed so distressed at the idea of going among strangers, that sooner than let her do so, I believe, if Miss Emily had not, I should have offered her a part of my bed; but this distress was all a pretext to get into the house with Mr. Siphthorpe, that she might try to entangle him in her snares again. Well, I am determined she shall not stay another night under my roof. Ay, you may stare as you please, miss, but you shall march directly; you are not so ignorant about London, I dare say, as you pretend to be."

Mrs. Connel rose as she spoke, and approached her with a look, which seemed to say she would put her threat into execution. It was Amanda's intention to quit the house the next morning; but to be turned from it at such an hour, a wanderer in the street, the idea was replete with horror!—She started up, and retreating a few paces, looked at Mrs. Connel with a kind of melancholy wildness. "Yes," repeated Mrs. Connel, "I say you shall march directly." The wretched Amanda's head grew giddy, her sight failed, her limbs refused to support her, and she would have fallen to the ground, had not Mrs. Rushbrook, who perceived her situation, timely caught her. She was replaced in a chair, and water sprinkled on her face. "Be composed, my dear," said Mrs. Rushbrook, whose softened voice proclaimed the return of her compassion; "you shall not leave this house to-night, I promise in the name of

Mrs. Connel; she is a good-natured woman, and would not aggravate your distress."

"Ay, Lord knows, good-nature is my foible," exclaimed Mrs. Connel; "so, miss, as Mrs. Rushbrook has promised, you may stay here to-night." Amanda opened her languid eyes, and raising her head from Mrs. Rushbrook's bosom, said, in a low tremulous voice, "To-morrow, madam, I shall depart. Oh! would to heaven," cried she, clasping her hands together, and bursting into an agony of tears, "before to-morrow I could be rid of the heavy burthen that oppresses me!"

"Well, we have had wailing and weeping enough to-night," said Mrs. Connel, "so, miss, you may take one of the candles off the table, and go to your chamber if you chuse."

Amanda did not require to have this permission repeated. She arose, and taking the light, left the parlour, With feeble steps she ascended to the little chamber; but here all was dark and solitary: no cheerful fire sent forth an animating blaze, no gentle Emily, like the mild genius of benevolence, appeared to offer, with undissembled kindness, her little attentions; forsaken, faint, the pale child of misery laid down the candle, and, seating herself at the foot of the bed, gave way to deep and agonizing sorrow.

"Was I ever," she asked herself, "blessed with friends who valued my existence as their own, who called me the beloved of their hearts? Oh, yes," she groaned, "once such friends were mine, and the said remembrance of them aggravates my present misery. Oh, happy is our ignorance of futurity! Oh! my father, had you been permitted to read the awful volume of fate, the page marked with your Amanda's destiny would have rendered your existence miserable, and made you wish a thousand times the termination of her's.

"Oh! Oscar, from another hand than mine must you receive the deed which shall entitle you to independence: my trials sink me to the grave, to that grave in which, but for the sweet hope of again seeing you, I should long since have wished myself." The chamber door

opened; she turned her eyes to it in expectation of seeing Emily, but was disappointed on perceiving only the maid of the house. "Oh! dear ma'am," cried she, going up to Amanda, "I declare it quite grieves me to see you in such a situation. Poor miss Emily is just in as sad a plight. Well, it is no matter, but I think both the old ladies will be punished for plaguing you in this manner. Madam Rushbrook will be sorry enough, when, after giving her daughter to Mr. Siphthorpe, she finds he is not what he seems to be." Amanda shrunk with horror from the idea of Emily's destruction, and by a motion of her hand signified to the maid her dislike to the subject. "Well, ma'am," she continued, "miss Emily, as I was saying, is quite in as bad a plight as yourself; they have clapped her into my mistress's chamber, which she durst not leave without running the risk of bringing their tongues upon her: however, she contrived to see me, and sent you this note." Amanda took it, and read the following lines:

"I hope my dear miss Donald will not doubt my sincerity, when I declare that all my sorrows are heightened by knowing I have been the occasion of trouble to her. I have heard of the unworthy treatment she has received in this house, and her intention of quitting it to-morrow; knowing her averseness to lodge in a place she is unacquainted with, I have been speaking to the maid about her, and had the satisfaction to hear, that, through her means, my dear miss Donald might be safely accommodated for a short time, long enough, however, to permit her to look out for an eligible situation. I refer her for particulars of the conversation to the maid, whose fidelity may be relied on. To think it may be useful to my dear miss Donald affords me the only pleasure I am now capable of enjoying. In her esteem may I ever retain the place of a sincere and affectionate friend.

"E. R."

"And where is the place I can be lodged in?" eagerly asked Amanda.

"Why, ma'am," said the maid, "I have a sister who is house-maid at a very grand place on the Richmond road. All the family are now gone to Brighton, and she is left alone in the house, where you would be very welcome to take up your residence till you could get one to your mind. My sister is a sage sober body, and would do every thing in her power to please and oblige you, and you would be as snug and secure with her as in a house of your own; and poor miss Emily begged you would go to her, till you could get lodgings with people whose characters you know; and, indeed, ma'am, it is my humble opinion it would be safe and pleasant for you to do so; and if you consent, I will conduct you there to-morrow morning; and I am sure, ma'am, I shall be happy if I have the power of serving you." Like the lady in Comus, Amanda might have said,

I take thy word,
 And trust thy honest offer'd courtesy;
 For in a place
 Less warranted than this, or less secure,
 I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
 Eye me, bless'd Providence, and square my trial
 To my proportion'd strength.

To take refuge in this manner in any one's house, was truly repugnant to the feelings of Amanda; but sad necessity conquered her scrupulous delicacy, and she asked the maid, "at what hour in the morning she should be ready for her."

"I shall come to you, ma'am," answered she, "as soon as I think there is a carriage on the stand, and then we can go together to get one: but I protest, ma'am, you look sadly; I wish you would allow me to assist in undressing you, for I am sure you want a little rest; I dare say, for all my mistress said, if you chose it, I could get a little wine from her to make whey for you." Amanda refused this, but accepted her offer of assistance, for she was so overpowered by the scenes of the day, as

to be almost unequal to any exertion. The maid retired after she had seen her to bed. Amanda entreated her to be punctual to an early hour, and, also requested her to give her most affectionate love to miss Rushbrook, and her sincere thanks for the kind solicitude she had expressed about her. Her rest was now, as on the preceding night, broken and disturbed by frightful visions. She rose, pale, trembling, and unrefreshed. The maid came to her soon after she was dressed, and she immediately accompanied her down stairs, trembling as she went, lest Belgrave should suddenly make his appearance, and either prevent her departure, or follow her to her new residence. She left the house, however, without meeting any creature, and soon obtained the shelter of a carriage.

As they proceeded, Amanda besought the maid, who seemed perfectly acquainted with every thing relative to Belgrave, to tell miss Rushbrook to believe her assertions against him, if she wished to save herself from destruction. The maid assured her she would, and declared she always suspected Mr. Siphthorpe was not as good as he should be. Amanda soon found herself at the end of her little journey. The house was elegant and spacious, with a short avenue before it, planted with chesnuts. The maid's sister was an elderly plain-looking woman, who received Amanda with every appearance of respect, and conducted her into a handsome parlour, where a neat breakfast was laid out. "I took care, ma'am," said the maid, smiling, "to apprise my sister last night of the honour she was to have this morning, and I am sure she will do every thing in her power to oblige you."

"I thank you both," cried Amanda, with her usual sweetness; but while she spoke a straggling tear stole down her lovely cheek at the idea of that forlorn situation, which had thus cast her upon the kindness of strangers; strangers who were themselves the children of poverty and dependence: "I hope, however," she continued, "I shall not long be a trouble to either, as it is my intention immediately to look out for a lodging a-

mongst the cottages in this neighbourhood, till I can settle my affairs to return to my friends. In the mean time I must insist on making some recompence for the attention I have received, and the expence I have put you to." She accordingly forced a present upon each, for both the women appeared unwilling to accept them; and Mrs. Deborah, the maid's sister, said, "it was quite unnecessary at present to think of leaving the house, as the family would not return to it for six weeks." Amanda, however, was resolved on doing what she had said, as she could not conquer the repugnance she felt to continue in a stranger's house. Mrs. Connel's maid departed in a few minutes; of the breakfast prepared for her, Amanda could only take some tea; her head ached violently, and her whole frame felt disordered. Mrs. Deborah, seeing her dejection, proposed showing her the house and garden, which was very fine, to amuse her; but Amanda declined the proposal at present, saying, "She thought if she lay down she should be better." She was immediately conducted to an elegant chamber, where Mrs. Deborah left her, saying, "She would prepare some little nice thing for her dinner, which she hoped would tempt her to eat."

Amanda now tried to compose her spirits by reflecting she was in a place of security; but their agitation was not to be subdued from the sleep into which mere fatigue had thrown her; she was continually starting in inexpressible terrors. Mrs. Deborah came up two or three times to know how she was, and at last appeared with dinner. She laid a small table by the bedside, and besought Amanda to rise and try to eat; there was a friendliness in her manner, which recalled to Amanda's recollection her faithful nurse Edwin, and she sighed to think that the shelter of her humble cottage she could no more enjoy (should such a shelter be required), from its vicinity to Tudor-Hall, near which every feeling of tenderness and propriety must forbid her residing; the sad remembrance which now revived in her mind drew tears from her, and rendered her unable to eat. She thanked Mrs. Deborah for her attention; but, anxious

to be alone, said she would no longer detain her; yet no sooner was she alone than she found solitude insupportable; she could not sleep, the anguish of her mind was so great, and arose with the idea that a walk in the garden might be of use to her. As she was descending the stairs she heard, notwithstanding the door was shut, a man's voice from a front parlour. She started, for she thought it was a voice familiar to her ear; with a light foot, and throbbing heart, she turned into a parlour at the foot of the stairs, which communicated with the other. Here she listened, and soon had her fears confirmed by recollecting the voice to be that of Belgrave's servant, whom she had often seen in Devonshire. She listened with that kind of horror, which the trembling wretch may be supposed to feel when about hearing a sentence he expects to be dreadful.

"Ay, I assure you," cried the man, "we are blown up at Mrs Connel's, but that is of little consequence to us; the colonel thinks the game now in view better than that he has lost, so to-night you may expect him in a chaise and four to carry off your fair guest."

"I declare I am glad of it," said Mrs. Deborah, "for I think she will die soon."

"Die soon!" repeated he, "oh! yes, indeed; great danger of that;" and he added something else, which, being delivered with a violent burst of laughter, Amanda could not hear: she thought she heard them moving towards the door; she instantly slipped from the parlour, and, ascending the stairs in breathless haste, stopped outside the chamber door to listen. In a few minutes she heard them coming into the hall, and the man softly let out by Mrs. Deborah. Amanda now entered the chamber, and closed the door, and knowing a guilty conscience is easily alarmed, she threw herself on the bed, lest Mrs. Deborah, if she found her up, should have her suspicions awakened. Her desperate situation inspired her with strength and courage, and she trusted, by presence of mind, to be able to extricate herself from it; it was her intention, if she effected her escape, to proceed directly to London, though the idea of entering it without

a certain place to go to, was shocking to her imagination; yet, she thought it a more secure place for her than any of the neighbouring cottages, which might be searched. Mrs. Deborah, as she expected, soon came up to her. Amanda involuntarily shuddered at her appearance, but knowing her safety depended on the concealment of her feelings, she forced herself to converse with the treacherous creature. She at last rose from the bed, declaring she had indulged her languor too much, and, after a few turns about the room, went to the window, and pretended to be engrossed in admiring the garden. "There is a great deal of fruit in the garden," said she, turning to Mrs. Deborah; "if I did not think it encroaching too much on your kindness, I should ask you for a nectarine or two."

"Dear ma'am," replied Mrs. Deborah, "you are heartily welcome. I declare I should have offered them to you, only I thought you would like a turn in the garden, and pull them yourself."

"No," said Amanda, "I cannot at present." Mrs. Deborah went off, and Amanda watched at the window till she saw her at the very end of the garden; she then snatched up her hat, and tied it on with a handkerchief, better to conceal her face, then hastily descended the stairs, and locked the back door to prevent an immediate pursuit. She ran down the avenue, nor flagged in her course till she had got some paces from it. She was then compelled to do so, as much from weakness as from fear of attracting notice, if she went on in such a wild manner. She started at the sound of every carriage, and hastily averted her head as they passed. But she reached London without any alarm but what her own fears gave her. The hour was now late and gloomy, and warned Amanda of the necessity there was for exertions to procure a lodging. Some poor women she saw retiring from their little fruit stands drew a shower of tears from her, to think her situation was more wretched than theirs, whom but a few days before she should have considered as objects of compassion. She knew at such an hour she would only be received into houses of an in-

CHILDREN OF

ferior description, and looked for one in which she could think there might be a chance of gaining admittance. She at last came to a small mean-looking house: "This humble roof, I think," cried she, "will not disdain to shelter an unhappy wanderer!" She turned into the shop, where butter and cheese were displayed, and where an elderly woman sat knitting behind the counter. She rose immediately, as if from surprise and respect at Amanda's appearance, who in universal agitation leaned against the door for support, unable for some minutes to speak. At last, in faltering accents, whilst over her pale face a crimson blush was diffused, she said, "I should be glad to know if you have any lodgings to let." The woman instantly dropped into her seat, and looking stedfastly at Amanda, "This is a strange hour," cried she, "for any decent body to come looking for lodgings!"

"I am as sensible of that as you can be," said Amanda, "but peculiar circumstances have obliged me to it: if you can accommodate me, I can assure you will not have reason to repent doing so."

"Oh! I do not know how that may be," cried she; "it is natural for a body to speak a good word of themselves; however, if I do let you a room, for I have only one to spare, I shall expect to be paid for it beforehand."

"You shall, indeed," said Amanda.

"Well, I will show it you," said she. She accordingly called a girl to watch the shop, and, taking a candle, went up, before Amanda, a narrow winding flight of stairs, and conducted her into a room, whose dirty, miserable appearance made her involuntarily shrink back, as if from the den of wretchedness itself. She tried to subdue the disgust it inspired her with, by reflecting that, after the imminent danger she had escaped, she should be happy to procure any asylum she could consider safe; she also tried to reconcile herself to it, by reflecting that in the morning she should quit it.

"Well, ma'am," said the woman, "the price of this room is neither more nor less than one guinea per week,

and if you do not like it, you are very welcome not to stay."

"I have no objection to the price," replied Amanda; "but I hope you have quiet people in the house."

"I flatter myself, ma'am," said the woman, drawing up her head, "there is never a house in the parish can boast a better name than mine."

"I am glad to hear it," answered Amanda, "and I hope you are not offended by the inquiry." She now put her hand in her pocket for the purse, to give the expected guinea; but the purse was not there. She sat down on the side of the bed and searched the other, but with as little success. She pulled out the contents of both, but no purse was to be found. "Now—now," cried she, clasping her hands together, in an agony which precluded reflection, "now—now, I am lost indeed! My purse is stolen," she continued, "and I cannot give you the promised guinea."

"No, nor never could, I suppose," exclaimed the woman. "Ah! I suspected all along what you were:—and so you were glad my house had a good name? I shall take care it does not lose that name by lodging you."

"I conjure you," cried Amanda, starting up and laying her hand on the woman's, "I conjure you to let me stay this night: you will not, you shall not lose by doing so. I have things of value in a trunk in town, for which I will this instant give you a direction."

"Your trunk," replied the woman in a scornful tone; "oh! yes, you have a trunk with things of value in it as much as you have a purse in your pocket. A pretty story, indeed; but I know too much of the ways of the world to be deceived now-a-days; so march directly."

Amanda again began to entreat, but the woman interrupted her, and declared, "if she did not depart directly she would be sorry for it." Amanda instantly ceased her importunities, and in trembling silence followed her down stairs. Oppressed with weakness, she involuntarily hesitated in the shop, which the woman perceiving, she rudely seized her, and pushing her from it, shut the door. Amanda could not now, as in former

exigencies, consider what was to be done. Alas! if even capable of reflection, it could have suggested no plan, which there was a hope of accomplishing. The powers of her mind were overwhelmed with horror and anguish; she moved mechanically along, nor stopped till from weakness she sunk upon the step of a door, against which she leaned her head in a kind of lethargy; but from this she was suddenly roused by two men who stopped before her. Death alone could have conquered her terrors of Belgrave. She instantly concluded these to be him and his man. She started up, uttered a scream, and, calling upon Heaven to defend her, was springing past them, when her hand was suddenly caught. She made a feeble but unsuccessful effort to disengage it, and, overcome by terror and weakness, fell, though not fainting, unable to support herself, upon the bosom of him who had arrested her course: —“Gracious Heaven!” cried he, “I have heard that voice before.”

Amanda raised her head:—“Sir Charles Bingley!” she exclaimed. The feelings of joy, surprise, and shame that pervaded her whole soul, and thrilled through her frame, were, in its present weak state, too much for it, and she again sunk upon his shoulder. The joy of unexpected protection, for protection she was convinced she would receive from sir Charles Bingley, was conquered by reflecting on the injurious ideas her present situation must excite in his mind; ideas she feared she would never be able to remove, so strongly were appearances against her.

“Gracious Heaven!” exclaimed sir Charles, “is this miss Fitzalan? Oh! this,” he cried, in a tone of deep dejection, “is, indeed, a meeting of horror!” A deep convulsive sob from Amanda alone proclaimed her sensibility, for she lay motionless in his arms, arms which involuntarily encircled and enfolded her to a heart that throbbed with intolerable anguish on her account. His friend stood all this time a silent spectator of the scene. The raillery which he had been on the point of uttering at seeing Amanda, as he thought, so

premeditatedly fall into the arms of his companion, was stopped by the sudden exclamation of sir Charles. Though the face of Amanda was concealed, the glimmering of a lamp over their heads gave him a view of her fine form, and the countenance of sir Charles, as he bent over her, full of sorrow and dismay.

"Miss Fitzalan," cried sir Charles, after the silence of a minute, "you are ill; allow me to have the pleasure of seeing you home."

"Home!" repeated Amanda, in the slow and hollow voice of despair, and raising her languid head, "alas! I have no home to go to."

Every surmise of horror which sir Charles had formed from seeing her in her present situation was now confirmed. He groaned, he shuddered, and, scarcely able to stand, was obliged to lean, with the lovely burthen he supported, against the rails. He besought his friend either to procure a chair or coach, in which he might have her conveyed to a house where he knew he could gain her admittance. Touched by his distress, and the powerful impulse of humanity, his friend instantly went to comply with his request.

The silence of Amanda, sir Charles imputed to shame and illness, and grief and delicacy forbade him to notice it. His friend returned in a few minutes with a coach, and sir Charles then found that Amanda's silence did not altogether proceed from the motives he had ascribed it to, for she had fainted on his bosom. She was lifted into the carriage, and he again received her in his arms. On the carriage stopping, he committed her to the care of his friend, whilst he stepped into the house to procure her a reception. In a few minutes he returned with a maid, who assisted him in carrying her up stairs; but on entering the drawing-room, how great was his amazement when a voice suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! merciful powers! this is miss Donald!" It was, indeed, to Mrs. Connel's house, and to the care of the Rushbrooks, whom his bounty had released from prison, he had brought her. He had previously informed them of the

situation in which he found her, little suspecting at the time she was the miss Donald they mentioned being under such obligations to.

"It is I, it is I," cried Mrs. Rushbrook, gazing on her with mingled horror and anguish, "it is I have been the occasion of her distress, and never shall I forgive myself for it."

"Oh! my preserver, my friend, my benefactress," said Emily, clasping her in an agony of tears to her bosom, "is it thus your Emily beholds you!" Amanda was laid upon a couch, and, her hat being removed, displayed a face which, with the paleness of death, had all the wildness of despair, a wildness that denoted more expressively than language could have done the conflicts her spirit had endured; heavy sighs announced her having recovered from her fainting fit; but her eyes still continued closed, and her head, too weak to be self-supported, rested against the arm of the couch. Mrs. Rushbrook and her daughter hung over her in inexpressible agonies. If they were thus affected, oh! how was sir Charles Bingley distressed! oh! how was the heart, which loved her with the most impassioned tenderness, agonized! As he bent over the couch, the big tear trickled down his manly cheek, and fell upon the cold pale face he contemplated. He softly asked himself, "Is this Amanda? Is this she, whom but a short time ago I beheld moving with unequalled elegance, adorned with unrivalled beauty, whom my heart worshipped as the first of women, and sought to unite its destiny to as the surest means of rendering that destiny happy? oh! what a change is here! how feeble is that form; how hollow is that cheek; how heavy are those eyes, whose languid glance speaks incurable anguish of soul! Oh! Amanda, was the being present, who first led you into error, what horror and remorse must seize his soul at seeing the consequence of that error!" "Has this unhappy young creature," asked Rushbrook, who had approached the couch, and viewed her with the truest pity, "no connexions that could be prevailed on to save her?"

"None that I know of," replied sir Charles; "her parents are both dead."

"Happy are the parents," resumed Rushbrook, "who, shrouded in the dust, cannot see the misfortunes of their children—the fall of such a child as this!" glancing his tearful eyes as he spoke on his daughters.

"And pray, sir," said Mrs. Connel, who was chaffing her temples with lavender, "if she recovers, what is to become of her?"

"It shall be my care," cried sir Charles, "to procure an asylum. Yes, Amanda," he continued, looking at her with an expression of mingled tenderness and grief, "he that must for ever mourn thy fate, will try to mitigate it; but does she not want medical assistance?"

"I think not," replied Mrs. Connel; "it is want of nourishment and rest has thrown her into her present situation."

"Want of nourishment and rest!" repeated sir Charles: "good heavens!" continued he, in the sudden agony of his soul (and walking from the couch), "is it possible that Amanda was a wanderer in the streets, without food, or a place to lay her head in? Oh! this is dreadful! Oh! my friends," he proceeded, looking around him, whilst his eyes beamed the divine compassion of his soul, "be kind, be careful of this poor creature; but it is unnecessary to exhort you to this, and excuse me for having done so. Yes, I know you will delight in binding up a broken heart, and drying the tears of a wretched outcast. A short time ago, and she appeared"—He stopped, overcome by his emotions, and turned away his head to wipe away his tears: "a short time ago," he resumed, "and she appeared all that the heart of man could desire, all that a woman should wish and ought to be. Now she is fallen, indeed; lost to herself and to the world."

"No," cried Emily, with a generous warmth, starting from the side of the couch at which she had been kneeling, "I am confident she never was guilty of an error."

"I am inclined, indeed, to be of Emily's opinion," said Mrs. Rushbrook. "I think the monster, who spread such a snare for her destruction, traduced miss Donald, in order to drive her from those who would protect her from his schemes."

"Would to Heaven the truth of your conjectures could be proved," exclaimed sir Charles. Again he approached the couch: Amanda remained in the same attitude, but, seeing her eyes open, he took her cold hand, and, in a soothing voice, assured her she was safe; but the assurance had no effect on her; her's, like the dull cold ear of death, was insensible to sound; a faint spark of life seemed only quivering through her woe-worn frame. "She is gone!" cried sir Charles, pressing her hand between his; "she is gone, indeed! Oh, sweet Amanda! the mortal bounds that enclose thy afflicted spirit will soon be broken."

"I trust not, sir," exclaimed captain Rushbrook; his wife and daughter were unable to speak: "in my opinion she had better be removed to bed."

Amanda was accordingly carried to a chamber, and sir Charles remained in the drawing-room till Mrs. Rushbrook had returned to it. She informed him miss Donald continued in the same state. He desired a physician might be sent for, and departed in inexpressible dejection.

CHAP. VI.

Love, gratitude, and pity, wept at once.

THOMSON.

WE shall now account for the incidents in the last chapter. Amanda's letter to the Rushbrooks filled them with surprise and consternation. Mrs. Rushbrook directly repaired to Mrs. Connel, who without he-

sitation, gave it as her opinion, that the whole was a fabrication, invented by malice to ruin Siphthorpe in their opinion, or else by envy to prevent their enjoying the good fortune which he offered to their acceptance. Mrs. Rushbrook was inclined to be of the same opinion: her mind was sensibly affected by the favours Siphthorpe had conferred on her family, and yielding to its gratitude, she resolved to be guided implicitly by her friend, who advised her to show the letter to him. She considered this the best measure she could pursue: if innocent, he would be pleased by the confidence reposed in his honour; if guilty, his confusion must betray him. But Belgrave was guarded against detection; his servant had seen Amanda as she was alighting from the coach the evening she arrived in town. He inquired from the maid concerning her, and learned that she was to lodge in the house, and go by her assumed name. These circumstances he related to his master the moment he returned home, who was transported at the intelligence; from her change of name, he supposed her not only in deep distress, but removed from the protection of her friends, and he determined not to lose so favourable an opportunity as the present for securing her in his power. He instantly resolved to relinquish his designs on Emily; designs which her beautiful simplicity and destitute condition had suggested, and to turn all his thoughts on Amanda, who had ever been the first object of his wishes. His pride, as well as love, was interested in again ensnaring her, as he had been mortified by her so successfully baffling all his stratagems. He knew not of the manner she had left his house; half distracted at what he supposed her escape from it, he had followed her to Ireland, and remained incognito near the convent, till the appearance of Mortimer convinced him any schemes he formed against her must prove abortive; but to concert a plan about securing her required some deliberation; ere he could devise one, he was summoned to Mrs. Connel's parlour to peruse the letter, and from the hand, as well as purport, instantly knew Amanda to be its author. With

the daring effrontery of vice, he directly declared she was a discarded mistress of his, who from jealousy had taken this step, to prevent, if possible, his union. He assured them her real name was not Donald, bid them tax her with that deceit, and judge from her confusion whether she was not guilty of that, as well as every thing else he alleged against her. His unembarrassed manner had the appearance of innocence to his too credulous auditors, prejudiced as they were already in his favour, and in their minds he was now fully acquitted of his imputed crimes. He was now careless whether Amanda saw him or not (for he had before stolen into the house), being well convinced nothing she could allege against him would be credited. When night approached without bringing her, he grew alarmed, lest he had lost her again. At last her return relieved him from this fear. The conversation which passed in the parlour he heard through means of his servant, who had listened to it. The mention of Amanda's removal in the morning made him immediately consult this servant about measures for securing her, and he, with the assistance of the maid, contrived the scheme which has been already related, having forged the letter in Emily's name. But how inadequate is language to describe the rage that took possession of his soul, when, going at the appointed hour to carry Amanda off, he found her already gone! He raved, cursed, stamped, and accused the women and his servant of being privy to her escape. In vain Mrs. Deborah told him of the trick she had played on her, and how she had been obliged to get into the house through the window. He continued his accusations, which so provoked his servant, conscious of their unjustness, that he at last replied to them with insolence. This, in the present state of Belgrave's mind, was not to be borne, and he immediately struck him over the forehead with his sword, and with a violence which felled him to the earth. Scarcely had he obeyed ere he repented this impulse of passion, which seemed attended with fatal consequences, for the man gave no symptoms of existence. Consideration for his own safe-

ty was more prevalent in his mind than any feeling of humanity, and he instantly rushed from the house, ere the woman was sufficiently recovered from her horror and amazement, to be able to call to the other servants, as she afterwards did, to stop him. He fled to town, and hastened to an hotel in Pall Mall, from whence he determined to hire a carriage for Dover, and thence embark for the continent. Ascending the stairs, he met a man of all others he would have wished to avoid, namely, Sir Charles Bingley. He started, but it was too late to retreat. He then endeavoured to shake off his embarrassment, from a faint hope that Sir Charles had not heard of his villanous design upon Miss Rushbrook; but this hope vanished the moment Sir Charles addressed him, who with coldness and contempt said, "he would be glad to speak to him a few minutes;" but ere we relate their conversation, it is necessary to relate a few particulars of the Rushbrooks.

Captain Rushbrook, from knowing more of the deceits of mankind than his wife, was less credulous; the more he reflected on the letter, the more he felt doubts obtruding on his mind, and he resolved sooner to forfeit the friendship of Siphthorpe than permit any further intercourse between him and his daughter, till those doubts were removed. He sent his son to Sir Charles's agent, and had the satisfaction of hearing he was then in town, and lodged at an hotel in Pall Mall. He immediately wrote to Sir Charles, and requested to see him whenever he was at leisure, adding, he was well convinced his benevolence would excuse the liberty he had taken, when informed of the purpose for which his visit was requested. Sir Charles was fortunately within, and directly attended little Rushbrook to the prison. The letter had filled him with surprize, but that surprize gave way, the moment he entered the wretched apartment of Rushbrook, to the powerful emotions of pity; a scene more distressing he had never seen, or could not have conceived. He saw the emaciated form of the soldier, for such his dress announced him, seated beside a dying fire, his little children surrounding him, whose faded counte-

nances denoted their keen participation of his grief, and the sad partner of his misery bending her eyes upon those children with mingled love and sorrow.

Rushbrook was unable to speak for a few minutes after his entrance. When he recovered his voice, he thanked him for the kind attention he had paid his request, briefly informed him of the motives for that request, and ended by putting Amanda's letter into his hand. Sir Charles perused it with horror and amazement: "Gracious Heaven!" he exclaimed, "what a monster! I know not the lady who has referred you to me, but I can testify the truth of her allegations. I am shocked to think such a monster as Belgrave exists."

Shocked at the idea of the destruction she was so near devoting her daughter to, disappointed in the hopes she entertained of having her family liberated from prison, and struck with remorse for her conduct to Amanda, Mrs. Rushbrook fell fainting to the floor, overpowered by her painful emotions. Sir Charles aided in raising her from it, for the trembling hand of Rushbrook refused its assistance. "Unhappy woman!" he exclaimed, "the disappointment of her hopes is too much for her feeble frame." Water, the only restorative in the room, being sprinkled on her face, she slowly revived, and the first object she beheld was the pale and weeping Emily, whom her father had insisted on being brought to the prison. "Oh, my child," she cried, clasping her to her bosom, "can you forgive the mother who was so near devoting you to destruction? Oh! my children, for your sake, how near was I sacrificing this dear, this precious girl! I blush, I shudder, when I reflect on my conduct to the unhappy young creature, who, like her guardian angel, interposed between my child and ruin; but these dreary walls," she continued, bursting into an agony of tears, "which now we must never hope to pass, will hide my shame and sorrows together."

"Do not despair, my dear madam," said Sir Charles, in the soft accent of benevolence; "nor do you," continued he, turning to Rushbrook, "deem me impertinent in inquiring into these sorrows." His accent, his

manner were so soothing, that these children of misery, who had long been strangers to the voice of kindness, gave him, with tears and sighs, a short relation of their sorrows. He heard them with deep attention, and when he departed, gave them such a smile, as we may suppose would beam from an angel, if sent by Heaven to pour the balm of comfort and mercy over the sorrows of a bursting heart.

He returned early in the morning: how bright, how animated was his countenance! O ye sons of riot and extravagance! ye children of dissipation! never did ye experience a pleasure equal to his, when he entered the apartment of Rushbrook to inform him he was free; when, in the impassioned, yet faltering accents of sensibility, he communicated the joyful tidings, and heard the little children repeat his words, while their parents gazed on each other with surprize and rapture.

Rushbrook at length attempted to pour out the fullness of his heart, but Sir Charles stopped him. "Blessed with a fortune," cried he, "beyond my wants, to what nobler purpose could superfluous wealth be devoted than to the enlargement of a man who has served his country, and who has a family, which he may bring up to act as he has done? May the restoration of liberty be productive of every happiness! Your prison gates, I rejoice to repeat it, are open; may the friendship which commenced within these walls be lasting as our lives!" To dwell longer on this subject is unnecessary. The transported family were conveyed to Mrs. Connel's, where he had been the preceding night to order every thing for their reception. He then had enquired about Siphthorpe, or rather Belgrave, whom he meant to upbraid for his cruel designs against Miss Rushbrook; but Belgrave, as soon as his plan was settled about Amanda, had quitted Mrs. Connel's. The joy of the Rushbrooks was greatly damped the next morning on hearing of the secret departure of Amanda. What Belgrave had said against her they never would have credited, but for the appearance of mystery which enveloped her; still her amiable attention to them merited their truest gratitude;

they wished to have expressed that gratitude to her, and offer her their services. Much as appearances were against Amanda, yet from the very moment Mrs. Rushbrook declared it her idea that Belgrave had traduced her for the purpose of depriving her of protection, a similar idea started in Sir Charles's mind, and he resolved to seek Belgrave, and never rest till he had discovered whether there was any truth in his assertions against Amanda. Their meeting at the hotel was considered as fortunate as unexpected by him; yet could he not disguise for a moment the contempt his character inspired him with. He reproached him as soon as they entered an apartment for his base designs against Miss Rushbrook, designs in every respect degrading to his character, since he knew the blow he levelled at the peace of her father could not, from the unfortunate situation of that father, be resented. "You are," continued Sir Charles, "not only the violator, but the defamer of female innocence; I am well convinced, from reflection on past and present circumstances, that your allegations against Miss Fitzalan were as false as vile."

"You may doubt them, Sir Charles," replied Belgrave, "if it is agreeable to you; but yet, as a friend, I advise you not to let every one know that you are her champion."

"Oh, Belgrave!" cried Sir Charles, "can you think without remorse of having destroyed not only the reputation, but the existence of an amiable young creature?"

"The existence!" repeated Belgrave, starting, and with a kind of horror in his look: "what do you mean?"

"I mean that Amanda Fitzalan, involved through your means in a variety of wretchedness she was unable to support, is now on her death-bed!" Belgrave changed colour, trembled, and in an agitated voice demanded an explanation of Sir Charles's words.

Sir Charles saw his feelings were touched, and trusting they would produce the discovery he wished, briefly gave him the particulars he asked for.

Amanda was the only woman that had ever really touched the heart of Belgrave. His mind, filled with

horror, and enervated with fear, at the idea of the crime he had recently committed, could make no opposition to the grief he experienced on hearing of her situation; a grief heightened almost to distraction, by reflecting that he was accessory to it. "Dying!" he repeated, "Amanda Fitzalan dying! But she will be happy; her's will be a pure and ministering spirit in heaven, while mine lies howling; the angels are not purer in mind and person than she is!"

"Then you are an execrable villain!" exclaimed Sir Charles, laying his hand on his sword.

"Strike!" exclaimed Belgrave, with an air of wildness; "death will rid me of horrors; death from you will be better than the ignominious one which now stares me in the face; for I have—oh! horrible,—this night I have committed murder!"

Astonished and dismayed, Sir Charles gazed on him with earnestness.

"It is true!" continued he in the same wild manner, "it is true! therefore strike! but against you I will not raise my hand; it were impious to touch a life like your's, consecrated to the purposes of virtue: no, I would not deprive the wretched of their friend."

Sir Charles, still shuddering at his words, demanded an explanation of them; and the tortured soul of Belgrave, as if happy to meet any one it could confide in, after a little hesitation, divulged at once its crimes and horrors. "No," cried Sir Charles, when he had concluded, "to raise a hand against him over whom the arm of justice is uplifted, were cruel; as well as cowardly; go then, and may repentance, not punishment, overtake you." To describe the raptures Sir Charles experienced at the acquittal of Amanda is impossible; not a fond father rejoicing over the restored fame of a darling child could experience more exquisite delight. The next morning, as soon as he thought it possible he could gain admittance, he hastened to Mrs. Connel's, and had the satisfaction of hearing from Mrs. Rushbrook that Amanda was then in a sweet sleep, from which the most salutary consequences might be expected. With almost trembling impatience,

he communicated the transports of his heart, and his auditors rejoiced as much at these transports on Amanda's account as on his. Mrs. Rushbrook and Emily had sat up with her the preceding night, which she passed in a most restless manner, without any perception of surrounding objects. Towards morning she fell into a profound sleep, which they trusted would recruit her exhausted frame. Mrs. Rushbrook then withdrew to her husband: It was past noon ere Amanda awoke. At first a pleasing languor was diffused through her frame, which prevented her from having an idea of her situation; but gradually her recollection returned, and with it anxiety to know where she was. She remembered to the moment she had met Sir Charles, but no farther. She gently opened the curtain, and beheld, oh! how great the pleasure of that moment! Emily sitting by the bed-side, who, instantly rising, kissed her cheek in a transport of affection, and inquired how she did. Oh! how delightful, how soothing was that gentle voice to the ears of Amanda! the softest music could not have been more grateful, her heart vibrated to it with an exquisite degree of pleasure, and her eyes feasted on the rays of benevolence which streamed from those of Emily. At last, in a faint voice, she said, "I am sure I am safe, since I am with Emily."

Mrs. Rushbrook entered at that instant: her delight at the restored faculties of Amanda was equal to her daughter's; yet the recollection of her own conduct made her almost reluctant to approach her. At last advancing, "I blush, yet I rejoice, oh! how truly rejoice, to behold you," she exclaimed: "that I could be tempted to harbour a doubt against you fills me with regret, and the vindication of your innocence can scarcely yield you more pleasure than it yields me."

"The vindication of my innocence!" repeated Amanda, raising her head from the pillow: "Oh, gracious heaven! is it then vindicated? Tell me, I conjure you, how, and by what means?"

Mrs. Rushbrook hastened to obey her, and related all she had heard from Sir Charles; the restoration of

her fame seemed to re-animate the soul of Amanda, yet tears burst from her, and she trembled with emotion. Mrs Rushbrook was alarmed, and endeavoured to compose her.

“Do not be uneasy,” said Amanda; “these tears will never injure me; it is long—it is very long, since I have shed tears of joy!” She implored Heaven’s choicest blessings on Sir Charles for his generosity to her, his benevolence to the Rushbrooks. Her heart, relieved of a heavy burthen of anxiety on her account, now grew more anxious than ever to learn something of her poor Oscar, and, notwithstanding Mrs. Rushbrook’s entreaties to the contrary, who feared she was exerting herself beyond her strength, she arose in the afternoon, for the purpose of going to the drawing-room, determined, as Sir Charles’s generous conduct merited her confidence, to relate to him, as well as Mr. Rushbrook, the motives which had brought her to town, the particulars of her life necessary to be known, and to request their assistance in trying to learn intelligence of her brother. Emily helped her to dress, and supported her to the drawing-room. Sir Charles had continued in the house the whole day, and met her as she entered with mingled love and pity, for in her feeble form, her faded cheek, he witnessed the ravages of grief and sickness; his eyes more than his tongue expressed his feelings, yet in the softest accent of tenderness did he pour forth those feelings, whilst his hand trembled as it pressed her’s to his bosom.

“My feelings, Sir Charles,” said she, “cannot be expressed; but my gratitude to you will cease but with my existence.”

Sir Charles besought her to be silent on such a subject. “He was selfish,” he said, “in every thing he did for her, for on her happiness his depended.”

Rushbrook approached to offer his congratulations. He spoke of her kindness, but, like Sir Charles, the subject was painful to her, and dropped at her request. The idea of being safe, the soothing attentions she experienced, gave to her mind a tranquillity it had long

been a stranger to, and she looked back on her past dangers but to enjoy more truly her present security. As she witnessed the happiness of the Rushbrooks, she could scarcely forbear applauding aloud the author of that happiness; but she judged of his heart by her own, and therefore checked herself by believing he would prefer the silent plaudits of that heart to any praise whatsoever. After tea, when only Sir Charles, Mr. and Mrs. Rushbrook, and Emily, were present, she entered upon the affairs she wished to communicate. They heard her with deep attention, wonder, and pity, and, when she concluded, both Sir Charles and Rushbrook declared their readiness to serve her. The latter, who had betrayed strong emotions during her narrative, assured her, "he doubted not, nay, he was almost convinced, he should soon be able to procure her intelligence of her brother."

This was a sweet assurance to the heart of Amanda, and cheered by it she soon retired to bed. Her strength being exhausted by speaking, she sunk into a tranquil slumber, and next morning she arose for breakfast. "Well," said Rushbrook to her, as they sat at it, "I told you last night I should soon be able to procure you intelligence of your brother, and I was not mistaken."

"Oh, Heavens!" cried Amanda, in trembling emotion, "have you really heard any thing of him?"

"Be composed, my dear girl," said he, taking her hand in the most soothing, most affectionate manner, "I have heard of him, but——"

"But what?" interrupted Amanda, with increased emotion.

"Why, that he has experienced some of the trials of life; but let the reflection that those trials are over, prevent your suffering pain by hearing of them."

"Oh! tell me, I entreat," said Amanda, "where he is. Tell me, I conjure you, shall I see him?"

"Yes," replied Rushbrook, "you shall see him: to keep you no longer in suspense, in that dreary prison from which I have been just released, he has languished for many months."

"Oh! my brother," exclaimed Amanda, while tears gushed from her.

"I knew not," continued Rushbrook, "from the concealment of your name, that he was your brother till last night. I then told Sir Charles, and he is gone this morning to him; but you must expect to see him somewhat altered. The restoration of liberty, and the possession of fortune, will no doubt soon re-establish his health. Hark! I think I hear a voice on the stairs."

Amanda started, arose, attempted to move, but sunk again upon her chair. The door opened, and Sir Charles entered, followed by Oscar. Though prepared for an alteration in his looks, she was not by any means prepared for the alteration which struck her the moment she beheld him: pale and thin, even to a degree of emaciation, he was dressed, or rather wrapped, in an old regimental great coat, his fine hair widely dishevelled. As he approached her, Amanda arose.

"Amanda, my sister," said he, in a faint voice. She tottered forward, and falling upon his bosom, gave way in tears to the mingled joy and anguish of the moment. Oscar pressed her to his heart. He gazed on her with the fondest rapture; yet a rapture suddenly checked, by surveying the alteration in her appearance, which was as striking to him as his was to her. Her pale and worn countenance, her sable dress, at once declared her sufferings, and brought most painfully to recollection the irreparable loss they had sustained since their last meeting.

"Oh, my father!" groaned Oscar, unable to controul the strong emotions of his mind; "oh, my father! when last we met we were blessed with your presence." He clasped Amanda closer to his heart as he spoke, as if doubly endeared to her by her desolate situation.

"To avoid regretting him, is indeed impossible," said Amanda; "yet, had he lived, what tortures would have wrung his heart in witnessing the unhappiness of his children, when he had not the power of removing it!"

"Come," cried Captain Rushbrook, whose eyes, like those of every person present, confessed his sympathetic

feelings, "let us not cloud present blessings by the retrospect of past misfortunes. In this life we must all expect to meet with such losses as you lament." As soon as Oscar and Amanda grew composed, they were left to themselves, and Oscar then satisfied the anxious and impatient heart of his sister, by informing her of all that had befallen him. He began with his attachment for Adela, and the disappointment of that attachment; but, as this part of the story is already known, we shall pass it over in silence, and merely relate the occasion of his quarrel with Belgrave.

CHAP. VII.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
 Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,
 If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
 Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
 Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn,
 Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
 To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

I LEFT Enniskillen, said Oscar, in the utmost distress of mind; for I left it with the idea that I might no more behold Adela: yet, dear and precious as her sight was to my soul, I rejoiced she had not accompanied the regiment, since to have beheld her but as the wife of Belgrave, would have been insupportable. Had the disappointment of my passion been occasioned by its not meeting a return, pride would have assisted me to conquer it; but to know it was tenderly returned, at once cherished, and, if possible, increased it. The idea of the happiness I might have attained, rendered me insensible of any I might still have enjoyed. I perform-

ed the duties of my situation mechanically, and shunned society as much as possible, unable to bear the raillery of my gay companions on my melancholy.

The summer you came to Ireland the regiment removed to Bray, whose romantic situation allowed me to enjoy many delightful and solitary rambles. It was there a man enlisted, whose manner and appearance were, for many days, subjects of surprise and conversation to all: from both it was obvious he had been accustomed to one of the superior situations in life. A form more strikingly elegant I never beheld: the officers made many attempts to try and discover who he really was, but he evaded all their inquiries, yet with the utmost agitation. What rendered him, if possible, more interesting, was his being accompanied by a young and lovely woman, who, like him, appeared sunk beneath her original state; but to their present one both conformed, if not with cheerfulness, at least with resignation.

Mary obtained work from almost all the officers; Henry was diligent in his duties, and both were universally admired and respected. Often in my lonely rambles have I surprised this unfortunate pair, who, it was evident, like me, sought solitude for the indulgence of sorrow, weeping together, as if o'er the remembrance of happier hours. Often have I beheld them gazing, with mingled agony and tenderness, on the infant which Mary nursed, as if shuddering at the idea of its destiny.

The loveliness of Mary was too striking not to attract the notice of Belgrave, and, from her situation, he flattered himself she would be an easy prey: he was, however, mistaken; she repulsed his overtures with equal abhorrence and indignation. She wished to conceal them from her husband, but he heard of them through the means of his fellow-soldiers, who had several times seen the colonel following his wife. It was then he really felt the bitterness of a servile situation. Of his wife he had no doubt; she had already given him a convincing proof of constancy, but he dreaded the insults she might receive from the colonel. The united vigilance of both,

prevented, however, for some time, a repetition of those insults. Exasperated by their vigilance, the colonel at last concerted one of the most diabolical plans which could have entered into the heart of man. A party of the soldiers were ordered to the sea-side, to watch there for smuggled goods; Henry was named to be one of the party; but, when the soldiers were drawn out, he was not to be found. Belgrave's servant, the vile agent of his master, had informed him that the colonel meant to take advantage of his absence, and visit his wife. He, trembling for her safety, resolved to run every risk sooner than leave her unguarded, and accordingly absconded till the departure of the party. The consequence of this was, that, on his re-appearance, he was put under an arrest, for disobedience of orders, tried the next day, and sentenced to be flogged on the following one. The very officers that passed the sentence regretted it; but the strictness of military discipline rendered it unavoidable.

I shall not attempt to describe the situation of the unhappy young couple; they felt for each other more than for themselves, and pride heightened the agonies of Henry.

Pale, weeping, with a distracted air, Mary flew to my apartment, and, sinking at my feet, with uplifted hands besought me to interpose in favour of her husband. I raised the poor mourner from the ground, and assured her, yet with a sigh, from the fear of proving unsuccessful, that I would do all in my power to save him. I therefore hastened to the colonel, to ask for another that favour I should have disdained to desire for myself. But to serve this wretched couple, I felt I could almost humble myself to the earth.

The colonel was on the parade, and, as if aware of my intention, appeared sedulous to avoid me. But I would not be repulsed by this, and, following him, entreated his attention for a few minutes.

"Dispatch your business then in haste, sir," said he, with an unusual haughtiness.

"I shall, sir," cried I, endeavouring to repress the indignation his manner excited, "and I also hope with success."

"What is your business, sir?" demanded he.

"'Tis the business of humanity," I replied, "and 'tis only for others I could ask a favour."

I then proceeded to mention it. Rage and malice inflamed his countenance as I spoke.

"Never," exclaimed he, "shall the wretch receive pardon from me, and I am astonished at your presumption in asking it."

"Yet not half so astonished," replied I, "as I am at your obduracy:—though why do I say so? from your past actions, I should not be surprised at any you may now commit."

His passion grew almost to frenzy; he asked me "if I knew who I was addressing?"

"Too well," I replied, "I know I am addressing one of the completest villains upon earth."

He raised a small rattan he held at these words, in a threatening manner: I could no longer oppose my indignation; I rushed upon him, wrested it from his hand, broke it, and flung it over his head.

"Now," cried I, laying my hand upon my sword, "I am ready to give you the satisfaction you may desire for my words—words whose truth I will uphold with my life."

"No," said he, with the coolness of deliberate malice, "'tis a far different satisfaction I shall expect to receive."

Some of the officers had by this time gathered round us, and attempted to interfere; but he commanded their silence in a haughty manner, and ordered me under an immediate arrest.

My fate I then knew decided, but I resolved to bear that fate with fortitude, nor let him triumph in every respect over me. I was confined to my room, and Henry, the next morning, was brought forth to receive his punishment. I will not, my sister, pain your gentle heart, by describing to you, as it was described to me by an of-

ficer, his parting from his wife; pride, indignation, tenderness, and pity, were struggling in his heart, and visible in his countenance. He attempted to assume composure; but when he reached the destined spot he could no longer control his feelings. The idea of being exposed, disgraced, was too much for his noble soul; the paleness of his face increased, he tottered, he fell into the arms of a soldier, and expired, groaning forth the name of Mary.

Four days after this melancholy event, a court-martial was held on me, when, as I expected, I was broken, for contempt to my superior officer. I retired to a little solitary inn near Bray, in a state of mind which baffles description, destitute of friends or fortune. I felt at that moment as if I had no business in the world.

I was followed to the inn by a young lieutenant, with whom I had been on an intimate footing. The grief he expressed at my situation roused me from almost a stupefaction that was stealing on me. The voice of friendship will penetrate the deepest gloom, and I felt my sorrows gradually allayed by it. He asked me, "had I fixed on any plan for myself?" I replied, "I had not; for it was vain to fix on plans when there were no friends to support them." He took my hand, and told me, "I was mistaken; in a few days he trusted to procure me letters to a gentleman in London, who had considerable possessions in the West Indies, if such a thing was agreeable to me." It was just what I wished for, and I thanked him with the sincerest gratitude.

In the evening I received a message from the unfortunate Mary, requesting to see me directly. The soldier who brought it said she was dying. I hastened to her; she was in bed, and supported by a soldier's wife. The declining sun-beams stole into the apartment, and shed a kind of solemn glory around her. The beauty that had caused her misfortunes was faded, but she looked more interesting than when adorned with that bloom of beauty. Sighs and tears impeded her words for some minutes after I approached her; at last, in a faint voice, she said, "I sent for you, sir, because I knew your goodness, your benevolence, would excuse the liberty; I

knew you would think that no trouble which could soothe the last sad moments of a wretched woman."

She then proceeded to inform me of the motives which made her send, namely, to convey her infant to her father, a person of fortune in Dublin, and to see her remains, ere I did so, laid by those of her husband's. "Her unfortunate Henry," she added, "had been son to a respectable merchant: their families were intimate, and an attachment which commenced at an early period between them was encouraged. Henry's father experienced a sudden reverse of fortune, and her's, in consequence of it, forbid their ever thinking more of each other: but they could not obey his commands, and married clandestinely, thus forfeiting the favour of all their friends, as Henry's thought he wanted spirit, and her's deemed her deficient in respect to her father; they were therefore compelled, by necessity, to a state of life infinitely beneath them; but in my grave," continued she, "I trust my father will bury all his resentment, and protect this little orphan."

I promised a religious observance to all her commands, and she expired in about an hour after I quitted her. Mournful were the tasks she enjoined me. I attended her remains to the grave, and then conveyed her child to Dublin.

Startled, amazed, distressed, her father too late regretted his rigour, and received her infant to his arms with floods of repentant tears.

I now procured my recommendatory letters, and sailed for England, having first written farewell ones to my father and Mrs. Marlowe, in which I informed both I was about quitting the kingdom. As soon as I had procured cheap lodgings in London, I repaired to the gentleman to whom I was recommended; but, conceive my consternation when I heard he was himself gone to the West Indies. I turned into a coffee-house with an intention of communicating this intelligence to my friend. While the waiter was getting me materials for writing, I took up a newspaper, and cast my eyes carelessly over it. Oh! my Amanda, what was the shock of

that moment, when I read my father's death! grief for him, anxiety for you, both assailed my heart too powerfully for its feelings: my head grew giddy, my sight failed me, and I fell back with a deep groan. When recovered, by the assistance of some gentlemen, I requested a carriage might be sent for, but I was too weak to walk to it. On returning to my lodgings I was compelled to go to bed, from which I never rose for a fortnight. During my illness, all the little money I had brought along with me was expended, and I was, besides, considerably in debt with the people of the house, for procuring me necessaries. When able to sit up, they furnished their accounts, and I candidly told my inability to discharge them; in consequence of this I was arrested, and suffered but to take of my clothes a change or two of linen. The horrors of what I imagined would be a lasting captivity, were heightened by reflecting on your unprotected situation. A thousand times was I on the point of writing, to inquire into that situation, but still checked myself by reflecting, that as I could not aid you, I should only add to any griefs you might be oppressed with by acquainting you of mine. The company of captain Rushbrook alleviated in some degree the dreariness of my time. I knew I should sustain an irreparable loss in losing him, but I should have detested myself if any selfish motives had prevented my rejoicing at his enlargement. Oh! little did I think his liberation was leading the way to mine. Early this morning he returned and introduced sir Charles Bingley to me. Gently, and by degrees, they broke the joyful intelligence they had to communicate; with truth I can aver, that the announcement of a splendid fortune was not so pleasing to my heart, as the mention of my sister's safety. Of my poor Adela, I know nothing since my confinement; but I shudder to think of what she may have suffered, from being left solely in the power of such a man as Belgrave, for the good old general died soon after I left Enniskellen.

"Regret not too bitterly, my dear Oscar," said Mrs. Marlowe, in one of her letters, "the good man's death, rather rejoice he was removed, ere his last hours were

embittered by the knowledge of his darling child's unhappiness."

"Oh! my sister," continued Oscar, with a heavy sigh, while tears fell from him and mingled with those Amanda was shedding, "in this world we must have still something to wish and to sigh for"

Oscar here concluded his narrative, with such an expression of melancholy, as gave to Amanda the sad idea of his passion for Adela being incurable. This was indeed the case; neither reason, time, nor absence could remove or lessen it, and the acquisition of liberty or fortune lost half their value by brooding o'er her loss.

When their friends returned to the drawing-room, and again offered their congratulations, Oscar's dejection would not permit him to reply to them. When Mr. and Mrs. Rushbrook spoke of the happiness he might now enjoy, he listened to their recapitulation of it as to a fulsome tale, to which his heart in secret gave the lie; an innate sense of piety, however, recalled him to a proper recollection of the blessings so unexpectedly declared to be his; he accused himself of ingratitude to heaven in yielding to murmurs, after so astonishing a reverse in his situation: perfect happiness, he had been early taught, and daily experience confirmed the truth of the remark, was rarely to be met with; how presumptuous in him, therefore, to repine at the common lot of humanity! to be independent, to have the means of returning the obligations sir Charles Bingley had conferred upon him; to be able to comfort and provide for his lovely and long-afflicted sister, and to distribute relief among the children of indigence, were all blessings which would shortly be his; blessings which demanded his warmest gratitude, and for which he now raised his heart with thankfulness to their divine Dispenser. His feelings grew composed; a kind of soft and serene melancholy stole over his mind: he still thought of Adela, but not with that kind of distracting anguish he had so recently experienced; it was with a kind of tender regret which a soul of sensibility feels when reflecting on a departed friend, and to him

Adela was as much lost as if already shrouded in her native clay. "Yes, my love," he said, as if her gentle spirit had already forsaken its earthly mansion, "in that happy world we shall be re-united, which only could reward thy goodness and thy sufferings."

He could now enter into conversation with his friends about the measures which should be taken to forward his pretensions. It was the opinion of captain Rushbrook and sir Charles, that to make known his claim to the marquis of Rosline, was all that was necessary; a claim which they did not imagine he would or could dispute, when such proofs of its validity as the testimony of lady Dunreath, and the will could be produced: was it disputed, it was then time enough to apply elsewhere for justice.

Sir Charles knew the marquis personally, and was also well acquainted in his neighbourhood, and declared he would accompany Oscar to Scotland. Oscar thanked him for his intention: the support of a person so well known, and universally esteemed, he was convinced would essentially serve him.

Sir Charles said regimental business required his presence in Ireland, which, however, would occasion no great delay, as he should have it transacted in a few days; and as his regiment lay near Donaghadee, they could cross over to Port-Patrick, and in a few hours after reach the marquis of Rosline's castle.

The day after the next he had fixed for commencing his journey, and he asked Oscar if it would be agreeable and convenient to accompany him then. Oscar instantly assured him it was both.

Amanda's heart fluttered at the idea of a journey to Ireland; it was probable, she thought, that they would take Wales in their way; and her soul seemed already on the wing to accompany them thither, and be left at the cottage of nurse Edwin, from whence she could again wander through the shades of Tudor-Hall, and take a last, a sad farewell of them; for she solemnly determined, from the moment she should be apprised of lord Mortimer's return to England, to visit them

more: in such a farewell she believed she would find a melancholy consolation that would soothe her spirits. She imagined there was no necessity for accompanying her brother into Scotland, and except told there was an absolute one, she determined to decline the journey, if she should be asked to undertake it. To go to the very spot where she would hear particulars of lord Mortimer's nuptials, she felt would be too much for her fortitude, and might betray to her brother a secret she had resolved carefully to conceal from him, as she well knew the pain he would feel from knowing that the pangs of a hopeless attachment were entailed upon her life, and would defeat whatever flattering hopes he entertained for her. Exclusive of the above-mentioned objections, she could not bear to go to a place where she might, perhaps, witness the pain which lord Mortimer must unavoidably feel from having any disgrace befall a family he was so nearly connected with. O how her heart swelled at the idea, that ere Oscar reached Scotland, the interest of the marquis of Rosline and lord Mortimer would be but one! From her apprehensions of being asked to undertake a journey so truly repugnant to her feelings she was soon relieved, by Oscar's declaring, that except she wished it, he would not ask her to take so fatiguing a one, particularly as her presence he could not think at all necessary.

Sir Charles Bingley assured him it was not, though in a low voice he said to her, "it was against his own interest he spoke."

She would now have mentioned her wish of going to Wales, had not a certain consciousness checked her; she feared her countenance would betray her motives for such a wish; while she hesitated about mentioning it, sir Charles Bingley told capt. Rushbrook, that he had applied to a friend of his in power for a place for him, and had been fortunate enough to make application at the very time there was one of tolerable emolument vacant, at ———, about seventy miles distant from London, whither it would be necessary he should go as soon as possible. He therefore proposed that he and Mrs.

Rushbrook should begin preparations for their journey the ensuing morning, and exert themselves to be able to undertake it in the course of the week.

They were all rapture and gratitude at this intelligence, which opened a prospect of support through their own means, and the bread of independence, however hardly earned, which here was not the case, must ever be sweet to souls of sensibility.

Oscar looked with anxiety at his sister, on the mention of the Rushbrooks' removal from town, as if to say, to whose care then can I entrust you. Mrs. Rushbrook interpreted his look, and instantly requested that miss Fitzalan might accompany them, declaring her society would render their felicity complete. This was the moment for Amanda to speak; she took courage, and mentioned her earnest wish of visiting her faithful nurse, declaring she could not lose so favourable an opportunity as now offered for the gratification of that wish, by accompanying her brother into Wales. Emily pleaded, but Amanda, though with the utmost gratitude and tenderness, as if to soften her refusal, was steady. Oscar was pleased with his sister's determination, as he trusted going into what might be called her native air, joined to the tender care of nurse Edwin, would recruit her health.

Sir Charles was in raptures at the idea of having her company so far on their way.

Every thing relative to the proceedings of the whole party was arranged before dinner, at which sir Charles presided, giving pleasure to all around him by the ineffable sweetness of his manners. He withdrew at an early hour at night, and his friends soon after retired to their respective chambers. On entering the breakfast room next morning, Amanda found not only her brother and the Rushbrooks, but sir Charles Bingley there. Immediately after breakfast he drew Oscar aside, and in the most delicate terms insisted on being his banker at present, to which Oscar gratefully consented. As soon as this affair was settled, he put a note into his sister's hands to purchase whatever she should deem

necessary, and she went out with the Rushbrooks, who, according to sir Charles's directions, began preparations for their journey this day. After their return, sir Charles found an opportunity of again making an offer of his hand to Amanda.

The sincere friendship she had conceived for him, made her determine to terminate his suspense on her account. "Was I to accept your generous proposal, sir Charles," said she, "I should be unworthy of that esteem which it will be my pride to retain, and my pleasure to return, because beyond esteem I cannot go myself: it is due to your friendship," cried she, after the hesitation of a moment, whilst a rosy blush stole over her lovely face, and as quickly faded from it, "to declare, that ere I saw you the fate of my heart was decided."

Sir Charles turned pale; he grasped her hands in a kind of silent agony to his bosom, then exclaimed, "I will not, miss Fitzalan, after your generous confidence, tease you with farther importunity."

CHAP. VIII.

———"I solitary court
The inspiring breeze."——

THOMSON.

THE ensuing morning Oscar, Amanda, and sir Charles began their journey. The Rushbrooks, who regarded Amanda as the cause of their present happiness, took leave of her with a tender sorrow that deeply affected her heart. The journey to Wales was pleasant and expeditious, the weather being fine, and relays of horses being provided at every stage. On the evening of the third day, they arrived about sun-set at the village which lay contiguous to Edwin's abode; from whence, as soon as they had taken some refreshment, Amanda

set off, attended by her brother, for the cottage, having ordered her luggage to be brought after her. She would not permit the attendance of sir Charles, and almost regretted having travelled with him, as she could not help thinking his passion seemed increased by her having done so. "How dearly," cried he, as he handed her down stairs, "shall I pay for a few short hours of pleasure, by the unceasing regret their remembrance will entail upon me!"

Amanda withdrew her hand, and bidding him farewell, hurried on. Oscar proceeded no farther than the lane which led to the cottage with his sister. He had no time to answer the interrogations which its inhabitants might deem themselves privileged to make; neither did he wish his present situation to be known to any others than those already acquainted with it: Amanda therefore meant to say she had taken the opportunity of travelling so far with two particular friends, who were going to Ireland. Oscar promised to write to her immediately from thence, and from Scotland as soon as he had seen the marquis. He gave her a thousand charges concerning her health, and took a tender farewell. From his too visible dejection, Amanda rejoiced she had not revealed her own sorrows to him. She trusted it would be in her power, by soothing attentions, by the thousand little nameless offices of friendship, to alleviate his; to pluck the thorn from his heart which rankled within it was beyond her hopes: in their dispositions, as well as fates, there was too great a similitude to expect this.

Amanda lingered in the walk as he departed: she was now in the very spot that recalled a thousand fond and tender remembrances; it was here she had given a farewell look to Tudor-Hall; it was here her father had taken a last look at the spire of the church where his beloved wife was interred; it was here lord Mortimer used so often to meet her: her soul sunk in the heaviest sadness; sighs burst from her overcharged heart, and with difficulty she prevented her tears from falling; all around was serene and beautiful, but neither the seren-

ty nor the beauty of the scene could she now enjoy; the plaintive bleating of the cattle, that rambled about the adjacent hills, only heightened her melancholy, and the appearance of autumn, which was now far advanced, only made her look back to the happy period when admiring its luxuriance had given her delight; the parting sunbeams yet glittered on the windows of Tudor-Hall; she paused involuntarily to contemplate it; hours could she have continued in the same situation, had not the idea that she might be observed from the cottage made her at last hasten to it.

The door lay open; she entered, and found only the nurse within, employed at knitting. Her astonishment at the appearance of Amanda is not to be described.— She started, screamed, surveyed her a minute, as if doubting the evidence of her eyes; then running to her, flung her arms about her neck, and clasped her to her bosom.

“Good gracious!” cried she, “well, to pe sure, who ever would thought of such a thing? well, to pe sure, you are as welcome as the flowers in May. Here we have been in such a peck of troubles about you; many and many a time has my good man said, that if he knew where you were he would go to you.” Amanda returned the embraces of her faithful nurse, and they both sat down together.

“Ah! I fear,” said the nurse, looking tenderly at her for a minutes, “you have been in a sad way since I last saw you. The poor tear captain, alack! little did I think when he took you away from us I should never see him more!” Amanda’s tears could no longer be suppressed; they gushed in torrents from her, and her deep sobs spoke the bitterness of her feelings.

“Ay,” said the nurse, wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron, “gentle or simple, sooner or later, we must all go the same way: so, my tear child, don’t take it so much to heart. Well, to pe sure, long before this I thought I should have seen or heard of your peing greatly married; but I believe it is true enough,

that men are like the wind, always changing. Any one that has seen lord Mortimer after you went away would never have thought he could prove fickle; he was in such grief, my very heart and soul pitied him; to be sure, if I had known where you were I should have told him: I comforted myself, however, by thinking he would certainly find you out, when, Lord! instead of looking for you, here he's going to be married to a great lady, with such a long hard name, a Scotch heiress I think they call her; ay, gold is every thing in these days. Well, all the harm I wish him is, that she may plague his life out."

This discourse was too painful to Amanda; her tears had subsided, and she endeavoured to change it, by asking after the nurse's family. The nurse, in a hasty manner, said they were well, and thus proceeded:—"Then there is Parson Howell, I am sure one would have thought him as steady as Penmaenmawr, but no such thing: I am sure he has changed, for he does not come to the cottage half so often to ask about you as he used to do."

Amanda, notwithstanding her dejection, smiled at the nurse's anger about the curate, and again requested to hear particulars of her family. The nurse no longer hesitated to comply with her request: she informed her they were all well, and then at a little tance at the mill in the valley. She also added, that Ellen was married to her faithful Chip, had a comfortable cottage, and a fine little girl she was nursing, and to whom, from her love to her dear young lady, she would have given the name of Amanda; but that she feared people would deem her conceited to give it so fine a one. The nurse said she often regretted having left her dear young lady, and then even Chip himself could not console her for having done so. Tears again started to Amanda's eyes at hearing of the unabated attachment of her poor Ellen; she longed to see, and congratulate her on her present happiness. The nurse, in her turn, enquired into all that had befallen Amanda since their separation, and shed tears at hearing of her dear child's sufferings.

since that period. She asked about Oscar, and was briefly informed he was well. The family soon returned from the dance, and it would be difficult to say whether surprise or joy was most predominant at seeing Amanda. One of the young men ran over for Ellen, and returned in a few minutes with her, followed by her husband, carrying his little child. She looked wild with delight. She clasped Amanda in her arms, as if she would never let her depart from them, and wept in the fulness of her heart. "Now—now," cried she, "I shall be quite happy; but, oh! why, my tear young lady, did you not come amongst us before? you know all in our power we would have done to render you happy." She now recollected herself, and modestly retired to a little distance. She took her child and brought it to Amanda, who delighted her extremely by the notice she took of it and Chip. If Amanda had had less cause for grief, the attentions of these affectionate cottagers would have soothed her mind; but at present nothing could diminish her dejection. Her luggage was by this time arrived; she had brought presents for all the family, and now distributed them. She tried to converse about their domestic affairs, but found herself unequal to the effort, and begged to be shown to her chamber. The nurse would not suffer her to retire till she had tasted her new cheese and Welch ale. When alone within it she found fresh objects to remind her of lord Mortimer, and consequently to augment her grief; here lay the book-case he had sent her. She opened it with trembling impatience; but scarcely a volume did she examine in which select passages were not marked by his hand for her particular perusal. Oh! what mementos were those volumes of the happy hours she had passed at the cottage! the night waned away, and still she continued weeping over them. She could with difficulty bring herself to close the book-case, and when she retired to rest, her slumbers were short and unrefreshing. The next morning, as she sat at breakfast assiduously attended by the nurse and her daughters, (for Ellen had come over early to enquire after her health,) Howell entered to pay her a visit; the previous intima-

tions she had received of the alteration in his sentiments, rendered his visit more pleasing than it would otherwise have been to her; his pleasure was great at seeing her; but it was not the wild and extravagant delight of a lover, but the soft and placid joy of a friend. After his departure, which was not soon, she accompanied Ellen to view her cottage, and was infinitely pleased by its neatness and romantic situation; it lay on the side of a hill which commanded a beautiful prospect of Tudor-Hall. Every thing she beheld reminded Amanda of lord Mortimer; even the balmy air she breathed, on which his voice had so often floated.

The sad indulgence of wandering through the shades of Tudor-Hall, which she had so eagerly desired and fondly anticipated, she could not long deny herself.—The second evening after her arrival at the cottage, she turned her solitary steps to them; their deep embowering glens, their solitude, their silence, suited the pensive turn of her feelings: here, undisturbed and unobserved, she could indulge the sorrows of her heart; and oh! how did recollection augment those sorrows, by retracing the happy hours she had spent within those shades. A cold, a death-like melancholy pervaded her feelings, and seemed repelling the movements of life; her trembling limbs were unable to support her, and she threw herself on the ground. For some minutes she could scarcely breathe; tears at length relieved her painful oppression; she raised her languid head, she looked around, and wept with increasing violence at beholding what might be termed mementos of former happiness. She repeated, in soft and tremulous accents, the name of Mortimer; but as the beloved name vibrated on her ear, how did she start at recollecting that she was then calling upon the husband of lady Euphrasia. She felt a momentary glow upon her cheeks; she arose, and sighed deeply. I will strive to do right, she cried; I will try to wean my soul from remembrances no longer proper to be indulged. Yet still she lingered in the wood; the increasing gloom of evening rendered it, if possible, more pleasing to her feelings, whilst the breeze

sighed mournfully though the trees, and the droning bat fluttered in the air, upon which the wild music of a harp from one of the neighbouring cottages softly floated.

Amanda drew nearer to it; it looked dark and melancholy: she sighed; she involuntarily exclaimed, oh! how soon will it be enlivened by bridal pomp and festivity.

She now recollected the uneasiness her long absence might create at the cottage, and, as soon as the idea occurred, hastened to it. She met Edwin in the lane, who had been dispatched by his wife in quest of her. The good woman expressed her fears that such late rambles would injure the health of Amanda; "it was a sad thing," she said, "to see young people giving way to dismal fancies."

Amanda did not confine her rambles entirely to Tudor-Hall; she visited all the spots where she and lord Mortimer used to ramble together. She went to the humble spot where her mother lay interred. Her feelings were now infinitely more painful than when she had first seen it; it recalled to her mind, in the most agonizing manner, all the vicissitudes she had experienced since that period; it recalled to view the calamitous closure of her father's life; the sorrows, the distresses of that life, and she felt overwhelmed with grief; scarcely could she prevent herself from falling on the grave, and giving way, in tears and lamentations, to that grief. Deprived of the dearest connexions of life, blasted in hopes and expectations, oh! well had it been for me, she cried, had this spot at once received the mother and the child!—and yet, she exclaimed, after a minute's reflection, oh! what, my God, am I, that I should dare to murmur or repine at thy decrees! Oh! pardon the involuntary expression of a woe-worn heart, of a heart that feels the purest gratitude for thy protection through past dangers. Oh! how presumptuous, she continued, to repine at the common lot of humanity—at the lot of her, she continued, casting her tearful eyes upon the grave, where the last flowers of autumn were now withering, who reposes in this earthly bed; who, in life's meridian, in beauty's prime:

sunk, the sad victim of sorrow, into the arms of death. Oh! my parents, how calamitous were your destinies! even your ashes were not permitted to moulder together; but, in a happier region, your kindred spirits are now united. Blessed spirits! your child will strive to imitate your example; in patient resignation to the will of heaven, she will endeavour to support life; she will strive to live; though not from an idea of enjoying happiness, but from an humble hope of being able to dispense it to others.

Such were the words of Amanda, at the grave of her mother, from which she turned like a pale and drooping lily, surcharged with tears.

At the end of a week she heard from Oscar, who told her, in the course of a few days he expected to embark for Scotland. Amanda had brought materials for drawing with her, and she felt a passionate desire of taking views of Tudor Hall—views she believed would yield her a melancholy pleasure, when she should be far and for ever distant from the spot they represented.

This desire, however, she could not gratify, without the assistance of her nurse, for she meant to take her views from the library, and she feared if she went there without apprizing the house-keeper, she should be liable to interruption. She therefore requested her nurse to ask permission for her to go there. The nurse shook her head, as if she suspected Amanda had a motive for the request she did not divulge. She was, however, too anxious to gratify her child, to refuse complying with it, and accordingly lost no time in asking the desired permission, which Mrs. Abergwilly readily gave, saying, "Miss Fitzalan was welcome to go to the library whenever she pleased, and should not be interrupted."

Amanda did not delay availing herself of this permission, but it was some time after she entered the library, ere she could compose herself sufficiently for the purpose which had brought her to it. In vain did nature appear from the windows, displaying the most beautiful and romantic scenery to her view, as if to tempt her to take up the pencil. Her eyes were dimmed with tears as she

looked upon this scenery, and reflected, that he who had once pointed out its various beauties, was lost to her for ever. By degrees, however, her feelings grew composed, and every morning she repaired to the library, feeling, whilst engaged within it, a temporary alleviation of sorrow.

Three weeks passed in this manner, and at the expiration of that period, she received a letter from Oscar. She trembled in the most violent agitation as she broke the seal, for she saw, by the post-mark, he was in Scotland; but how great was her surprise and joy at the contents of this letter, which informed her, every thing relative to the important affair so lately in agitation, was settled in the most amicable manner; that the avowal of his claim occasioned not the smallest litigation; that he was then in full possession of the fortune bequeathed him by the earl, and had already received the congratulation of the neighbouring families on his accession, or rather restoration to it. He had not time, he said, to enumerate the many particulars which rendered the adjustment of affairs so easy, and hoped the pleasing intelligence his letter communicated, would atone for its brevity; he added he was then preparing to set off for London, with sir Charles Bingley, of whose friendship he spoke in the highest terms, to settle some affairs relative to his new possessions, and particularly about the revival of the Dunreath title, which, not from any ostentatious pride, he desired to obtain, as he was sure she would suppose, but from gratitude and respect to the wishes of his grandfather, who, in his will, had express his desire that the honours of his family should be supported by his heir. When every thing was finally settled, he proceeded to say, he would hasten on the wings of love and impatience to her, for in her sweet society alone, he found any balm for the sorrows of his heart, sorrows which could not be eradicated from it, though fortune had been so unexpectedly propitious; and he hoped, he said, he should find her then gay as the birds, blooming as the flowers of spring, and ready

to accompany him to the venerable mansion of their ancestors.

The joyful intelligence this letter communicated she had not spirits at present to mention to the inhabitants of the cottage: the pleasure it afforded was only damped by reflecting on what lord Mortimer must feel from a discovery which could not fail of casting a dark shade of obloquy upon his new connexions. She was now doubly anxious to finish her landscapes, from the prospect there was for quitting Wales so soon. Every visit she now paid the library was paid with the sad idea of its being the last. As she was preparing for going there one morning, immediately after breakfast, the nurse, who had been out some time previous to her rising, entered the room with a look of breathless impatience, which seemed to declare she had something wonderful to communicate. "Goot lack-a-taisy," cried she, as soon as she had recovered her breath, lifting up her head from the back of the chair on which she had thrown herself, "goot lack-a-taisy, well to pe sure, there is nothing put wonderful things happening in this world! Here old dame Abergwilly sent in such a hurry for me this morning; to pe sure I was surprised, put what was that to the surprise I felt when I heard what she had sent to me for?" It was now Amanda's turn to feel breathless impatience. "Good Heavens!" she exclaimed, "what did she tell you?"

"Ay, I knew," cried the nurse, "the commotion you would be in when I told you the news; if you were guessing from this time till this time to-morrow, you would never stumble upon what it is."

"I dare say I should not," cried Amanda, "so do be brief."

"Why, you must know—put Lort, my tear chilt, I am afraid you made but a bad breakfast, for you look very pale; inteed I made no great one myself, for I was in such a hurry-flurry with what Mrs. Abergwilly told me, that, though she made some nice green tea, and we had a slim cake, I could scarcely touch any thing."

"Well," said Amanda, tortured with anxiety and impatience, "what did she tell you?"

"Why, my tear chilt, down came a special messenger from London last night, to let them know that lord Cherbury was dead, and that lord Mortimer had sold Tudor-Hall, and the steward is ordered to pay all the servants off, and discharge them, and to have every thing in readiness against the new landlord comes down to take possession.—Oh! Lord, there is such weeping and wailing at the Hall; the poor creatures, who had grown old in the service, hoped to have finished their days in it: it is not that they are in fear of want, the young lord has taken care of that, for he has settled something yearly upon them all, but that they are sorry to quit the family. Poor Mrs. Abergwilly, nothing can comfort the old soul; she has neither chick nor child, and she told me she loved the very chairs and tables, to which, to be sure, her hand has given many a polishing rub. She says she thinks she will come and lodge with me; but if she does, she says I must not put her in a room from whence she can have a view of Tudor-Hall, for she says she will never be able to look at it when once it gets a new master; so this, my tear chilt, is the sum totum of what I have heard."

Amanda was equally astonished and affected by what she heard. She wished to know if the nurse had received any intelligence of lord Mortimer's marriage, but she could not bring herself to ask the question; besides, upon reflection, she was convinced she should have heard it had it been the case. With lord Cherbury died all hopes of the restoration of her fame in the opinion of his son: "yet, why," she asked herself, "should I regret this? Since thus separated, it is better, perhaps, he has ceased to esteem me, as undoubtedly it must lessen his feelings on my account." Why he should part with Tudor-Hall she could not conceive, except it was to humour some caprice of lady Euphrasia's, who it was probable (she imagined) knew that the attachment between lord Mortimer and her had there commenced.

"Ah!" cried Amanda, "she never could have relished its beauties—beauties which, if lord Mortimer thinks as I do, would, if reviewed, only have augmented his sorrows—sorrows which propriety now demands his repelling."—She hastened to the hall, but was some time there ere she could commence her employment, so much had she been agitated. The landscape she was finishing was taken from the little valley which lay beneath the windows of the music-room, the romantic ruins of an old castle overhung an eminence at its extremity; and of the whole scene she had taken a most accurate copy; it wanted but one charm to please her, and that charm was the figure of lord Mortimer, with whom she had often wandered round the ruins. Her hand was ready in obeying the impulse of her heart, and she soon beheld sketched, in the most striking manner, the elegant features of him so ardently beloved. She gazed with rapture upon them, but it was a short-lived rapture. She started, as if conscious she had committed a crime, when she reflected on the situation in which he now stood with another woman; her trembling hand hastened to atone for its error, by expunging the dangerous likeness, and the warm involuntary tear she shed at the moment aided her design. "Oh! how unnecessary," she cried, as she made this sacrifice to delicacy, "to sketch features which are indelibly engraven on my heart." As she spoke, a deep and long-drawn sigh reached her ear: alarmed, confounded at the idea of being overheard, and of course the feelings of her heart discovered, she started with precipitation from her seat, and looked around her with a kind of wild confusion; but, gracious Heavens! who can describe the emotions of her soul, when the original of that picture, so fondly sketched, so hastily obliterated, met her eye! Amazed, unable to speak, to move, almost to breathe, she stood motionless and aghast, the pale statue of surprise, as if she neither durst nor could believe the evidence of her eyes. Well, indeed, might she have doubted them, for in the pale countenance of lord Mortimer scarce a vestige of his former self (except in the benignancy of his

looks) remained. His faded complexion, the disorder of his hair, his mourning habit, all heightened the sad expression of his features, an expression which declared that he and happiness were never so disunited as at the present moment. The first violence of Amanda's feelings in a little time abating, she somewhat recovered the use of her faculties, and, hastily snatching up her drawings, moved with weak and trembling steps to the door. She had nearly reached it when the soft, the tremulous voice of lord Mortimer arrested her course. "You go, then, miss Fitzalan," cried he, "without one adieu; you go, and we never more shall meet." The agonizing manner in which these words were pronounced struck a death-like chill upon the heart of Amanda: she stopped and turned around involuntarily, as if to receive that last and sad adieu which she was half reproached for avoiding. Lord Mortimer approached her; he attempted to speak, but his voice was inarticulate; a gust of sorrow burst from his eyes, and he hastily covered his face with a handkerchief, and walked to a window.

Amanda, unutterably affected, was unable to stand; she sunk upon a chair, and watched, with a bursting heart, the emotions of lord Mortimer. Oh! with what difficulty, at this moment, did she confine herself within the cold, the rigid rules of propriety—with what difficulty did she prevent herself from flying to lord Mortimer—from mingling tears with his, and lamenting the cruel destiny which had disunited them for ever. Lord Mortimer in a few minutes was sufficiently recovered again to approach her. "I have long wished for an opportunity of seeing you," said he, "but had not courage to desire an interview. How little did I imagine, this morning, when, like a sad exile, I came to take a last farewell of my favourite residence, that I should behold you! Fate, by granting this interview, has for once befriended me. To express my horror, my remorse, my anguish, not only for the error a combination of events influenced me into concerning you—but for the conduct that error led me to adopt, will, I think, a little lighten my heart; to receive your

pardon will be a sweet, a sad consolation. Yet," continued he, after a moment's pause, "why do I say it will be a consolation? Alas! the sweetness that may lead you to accord it will only heighten my wretchedness at our eternal separation." Here he paused. Amanda was unable to speak. His words seemed to imply he was acquainted with the injuries she had sustained through his father's means, and she waited in trembling expectation for an explanation of them. "The purity of your character," exclaimed lord Mortimer, "was at length fully revealed to me—good heaven! under what afflicting circumstances!—by that being to whom you so generously made a sacrifice of what then—you might have considered your happiness."

"Did lord Cherbury, then," said Amanda, with inexpressible eagerness, "did he then, at last, justify me?"

"Yes," cried lord Mortimer, "he proved you were indeed the most excellent, the most injured of human beings, that you were all which my fond heart had once believed you to be; but, oh! what were the dreadful emotions of that heart to know his justification came too late to restore its peace. Once there was a happy period, when, after a similar error being removed, I had hoped, by a life for ever devoted to you, to have made some reparation, some atonement, for my involuntary injustice; but, alas! no reparation, no atonement, can now be made."

Amanda wept; she raised her streaming eyes to heaven, and again cast them to the earth.

"You weep!" cried lord Mortimer, in a tone expressive of surprise, after surveying her some minutes in silence; "my love, my Amanda," continued he, suddenly seizing her hand, while he surveyed her with a most rapturous fondness, a crimson glow mantling his cheek, and a beam of wonted brilliancy darting from his eye: "What am I to imagine from those tears? Are you then, indeed, unaltered?"

Amanda started; she feared the emotions she betrayed had convinced lord Mortimer of the continuance

the unabated strength of her affection; she felt shocked at her imprudence, which had alone, she was convinced, tempted lord Mortimer to address her in such a manner. "I know not, my lord," cried she, "in what sense you ask whether I am unchanged; but of this be assured, a total alteration must have taken place in my sentiments, if I could remain a moment longer with a person, who seems at once forgetful of what is due to his own situation and mine."

"Go, then, madam," exclaimed lord Mortimer, in an accent of displeasure, "and pardon my having thus detained you; pardon my involuntary offence, excuse my having disturbed your retirement, and obtruded my sorrows on you."

Amanda had now reached the door; her heart recoiled at the idea of parting in such a manner from lord Mortimer, but prudence bid her hasten as fast as possible from him; yet slow and lingering she pursued her way: ere she had gone many yards, she was overtaken by lord Mortimer; his pride was inferior to his tenderness, which drove him to despair at the idea of his parting in displeasure from her. "Oh! my Amanda," cried he, seizing her hand, and almost breathless with emotion, "add not, by your anger, to the bitterness of this sad hour; since we must part, oh! let us part in amity, as friends that regard each other. You have not yet (if indeed it is possible for you to do so) pronounced your forgiveness of the persecutions you underwent on my account; you have not yet granted your pardon for the harshness, the cruelty with which a dreadful error tempted me to treat you."

"Oh! my lord," said Amanda, again yielding to the softness of her soul, while tears trickled down her cheeks, "why torture me by speaking in this manner? How can I pronounce forgiveness when I never was offended? when wretched and deserted I appeared to stand upon the great theatre of life, without one hand to offer me assistance, your ready friendship came to my relief, and poured the balm of comfort over the sorrows of my

heart; when deprived by deceit and cruelty of your good opinion, even then your attention and solicitude pursued my wandering footsteps, and strove to mark a path of comfort for me to take. These, these are obligations that never can be forgotten, that demand, that possess my eternal gratitude, my——.” A warmer expression rose to her lips, but was again buried in her heart. She sighed, and, after a pause of a minute, thus went on: “For your happiness, my warmest, purest prayers are daily offered up; oh! may it yet be equal to your virtues, greater I cannot wish it.”

Lord Mortimer groaned in the excruciating agony of his soul. “Oh! Amanda,” he said, “where—where can I receive consolation for your loss? Never—never in this world!” He took her hands within his, he raised them to Heaven, as if supplicating its choicest blessings on her head. “For my happiness you pray,” he exclaimed—“ah! my love, how unavailing is the prayer!”

Amanda now saw more than ever the necessity of hastening away. She gently withdrew her hands, and hurried on as fast as her trembling limbs could carry her. Still lord Mortimer attended her: “Yet, Amanda,” cried he, “a little moment. Tell me,” he continued, again seizing her hand, “do not these shades remind you of departed hours? Oh! what blissful ones have we not passed beneath their foliage, that foliage which I shall never more behold expanding to the breath of spring.”

Amanda trembled: this involuntary, but sad declaration of the loss of a seat so valued by him, overpowered her; her respiration grew faint, she could not support herself, and made a motion to sit down upon the grass, but lord Mortimer eagerly caught her to his bosom. She had not strength to resist the effort, and her head reclined upon his shoulder; but who can speak her feelings, as she felt the beating heart of Mortimer, which, from its violent palpitations, seemed as if it would burst his bosom to find a passage to her feet? In a few minutes she was a little recovered, and, sensible of the impropriety of her situation, was now resolutely determined to quit lord Mortimer. “We must part, my lord,” cried she,

disengaging herself from his arms, notwithstanding a gentle effort he made to detain her; "we must part, my lord," she repeated, "and part for ever."

"Tell me, then," he exclaimed, still impeding her course, "tell me whether I may still hope to live in your remembrance, whether I may hope not to be obliterated from your memory by the happiness which will shortly surround you: promise I shall at times be thought of with your wonted, though, alas! unavailing wishes for my happiness, and the promise will perhaps afford me consolation in the solitary exile I have doomed myself to."

"Oh! my lord," said Amanda, unable to repress her feelings, "why do I hear you speak in this manner? In mentioning exile, do you not declare your intention of leaving unfilled the claims which situation, family, and society have upon you? Oh! my lord, you shock, shall I say more, you disappoint me! Yes, I repeat it, disappoint the idea I had formed of the virtue and fortitude of him who, as a friend, I shall ever regard: to yield thus to sorrow, to neglect the incumbent duties of life, to abandon a woman to whom so lately you plighted your solemn vows of love and protection: oh! my lord, what will her friends, what will lady Euphrasia herself say to such cruel, such unjustifiable conduct?"

"Lady Euphrasia!" repeated lord Mortimer, recoiling a few paces, "lady Euphrasia!" he again exclaimed, in tremulous accents, regarding Amanda with an expression of mingled horror and wildness: "gracious heaven! is it, can it be possible you are ignorant of the circumstances which lately happened? Yes, your words, your looks declare you are so."

It was now Amanda's turn to repeat his words. She demanded, with a wildness of countenance equal to that he had just displayed, "what were the circumstances he alluded to?"

"First tell me," cried he, "was the alteration in your manner produced by you supposing me the husband of lady Euphrasia?"

"Supposing you her husband!" repeated Amanda, unable to answer his question in a moment of such torturing suspense: "and are you not so?"

"No," replied lord Mortimer, "I never had the misfortune to offer vows which my heart could not ratify. Lady Euphrasia made another choice. She was your enemy, but I know your gentle spirit will mourn her sad and sudden fate." He ceased, for Amanda had no longer power to listen; she sunk, beneath surprise and joy, into the expanded arms of her beloved Mortimer. It is ye alone who, like her, have stood upon the very brink of despair, who, like her, have been restored, unexpectedly restored to hope, to happiness, that can form any judgment of her feelings at the present moment—at the moment when recovering from her insensibility, the soft accent of lord Mortimer saluted her ear, and made her heart, without one censure from propriety, respond to rapture, as he held her to his bosom; as he gazed on her with tears of impassioned tenderness, he repeated his question, whether the alteration in her manner was produced alone by the supposition of his marriage; but he repeated it with a sweet, a happy consciousness of having it answered according to his wishes.

"These tears, these emotions, oh! Mortimer, what do they declare?" exclaimed Amanda. "Ah! do they not say my heart never knew a diminution of tenderness, that it could never have forgotten you? Yes," she continued, raising her eyes, streaming with tears of rapture, to Heaven, "I am now recompensed for all my sufferings: yes, in this blissful moment I meet a full reward for them." Lord Mortimer now led her back to the library, to give an explanation of the events which had produced so great a reverse of situation: but it was long ere he could sufficiently compose himself to commence his narrative; alternately he fell at the feet of Amanda, alternately he folded her to his bosom, and asked his heart if its present happiness was real. A thousand times he questioned her whether she was indeed unaltered, as often implored her forgiveness for one moment

doubting her constancy. Amanda exerted her spirits to calm her own agitation, that she might be enabled to sooth him into tranquillity. At length she succeeded, and he terminated her anxious impatience by giving her the promised relation.

CHAP. XI.

By suffering well, our torture we subdue,
Fly when she frowns, and when she calls pursue.

OVERWHELMED with grief and disappointment at the supposed perfidy of Amanda, lord Mortimer had returned to England, acquainting lord Cherbury and lady Martha of the unhappy cause of his returning alone; entreating them, in pity to his wounded feelings, never to mention the distressing subject before him. His dejection was unconquerable; all his schemes of felicity were overthrown, and the destruction of his hopes was the destruction of his peace. It was not in these first transports of bitter sorrow that lord Cherbury ventured to speak his wishes to his son: he waited till by slow degrees he saw a greater degree of composure in his manner, though it was a composure attended with no abatement of melancholy. At first he only hinted those wishes; hints, however, which lord Mortimer appeared designedly insensible of. At last the earl spoke plainer; he mentioned his deep regret at beholding a son, whom he had ever considered the pride of his house, and the solace of his days, wasting his youth in wretchedness for an ungrateful woman, who had long triumphed in the infatuation which bound him to her: it filled his soul with anguish, he said, to behold him lost to himself, his family, and the world, thus disappointing all the hopes and expectations which the fair promise of

his early youth had given rise to in the bosom of his friends, concerning the meridian of his day.

Lord Mortimer was unutterably affected by what his father said. The earl beheld his emotions, and blest it as a happy omen. His pride, as well as sensibility, he continued, were deeply wounded at the idea of having lord Mortimer still considered the slave of a passion which had met so base a return. Oh ! let not the world, added he, with encreasing energy, triumph in your weakness; try to shake it off, ere the finger of scorn and ridicule is pointed at you, as the dupe of a deceitful woman's art.

Lord Mortimer was inexpressibly shocked : his pride had frequently represented as weakness the regret he felt for Amanda ; and the earl now stimulating that pride, he felt at the moment as if he could make any sacrifice which would prove his having triumphed over his unfortunate attachment ; but when his father called upon him to make such a sacrifice, by uniting himself to lady Euphrasia, he shrunk back, and acknowledged he could not give so fatal a proof of fortitude. He declared his total repugnance at present to any alliance ; time, and the efforts of reason, he trusted, would subdue his ill-placed attachment, and enable him to comply with the wishes of his friends.

Lord Cherbury would not, could not drop the subject next his heart, a subject so important, so infinitely interesting to him : he exerted all his eloquence, he intreated, he implored his son, not for ever to disappoint his wishes ; he mentioned the compliance he had so recently shown to his, though against his better judgment, in the useless consent he had given to his marriage with miss Fitzalan.

Lord Mortimer, persecuted by his arguments, at length declared, that was the object he pointed out for his alliance any other than lady Euphrasia Sutherland, he would not, perhaps, be so reluctant to comply with his wishes ; but she was a woman he could never esteem, and must, consequently, for ever refuse ; she had given such specimens of cruelty and deceit, in the schemes she

had entered into with the marchioness, against (he blushed, he faltered, as he pronounced her name) miss Fitzalan, that his heart felt unutterable dislike to her.

The earl was prepared for this ; he had the barbarity to declare, in the most unhesitating manner, he was sorry still to find him blinded by the art of that wretched girl ; he bid him reflect on her conduct, and then consider whether any credence was to be given on her declaration of Belgrave's being admitted to the house without her knowledge.

Lord Mortimer was startled ; her conduct, indeed, as his father said, might well make him doubt her veracity. But still the evidence of the servants ; they acknowledged having been instruments in forwarding the scheme which she said was laid against her. He mentioned this circumstance ; the earl was also prepared for it : the servants, he declared, had been examined in his presence, when, with shame and contrition they confest, that seeing the strong anxiety of lord Mortimer for the restoration of miss Fitzalan's fame, and tempted by the large bribes he offered, if they could or would say any thing in her justification, they had, at last, made the allegation so pleasing to him.

Lord Mortimer sighed deeply ; on every side, cried he, I find I have been the dupe of art ; but it was only the deceit of one could agonize my soul. Still, however, he was inexorable to all his father could say, relative to lady Euphrasia.

Lady Martha was at last brought in as an auxiliary ; she was now as strenuous for the connection as ever lord Cherbury had been ; a longer indulgence of lord Mortimer's grief, she feared, would completely undermine his health, and either render him a burthen to himself, or precipitate him to an early grave. Whilst he continued single, she knew he would not consider any vigorous exertions for overcoming that grief necessary ; but if once united, she was convinced, from the rectitude and sensibility of his disposition, he would struggle against his feelings, in order to fulfil the incumbent duties he had imposed upon himself. Thus did she deem a union

requisite to rouse him to exertion, to restore his peace, and in all probability to save his life. She joined in her brother's arguments and entreaties, with tears she joined in them, and besought Mortimer to accede to their wishes; she called him the last hope of their house; he had long, she said, been the pride, the delight of their days; their comfort, their existence, were interwoven in his; if he sunk, they sunk with him.

The yielding soul of Mortimer could not resist such tenderness, and he gave a promise of acting as they wished. He imagined he could not be more wretched; but scarcely had this promise past his lips, ere he felt an augmentation of misery. To enter into new engagements, to resign the sweet, though melancholy privilege of divulging his feelings, to fetter at once both soul and body, were ideas that filled him with unutterable anguish. A thousand times was he on the point of retracting his regretted and reluctant promise, had not honour interposed, and showed the inability of doing so, without an infringement on its principles. Thus entangled, Mortimer endeavoured to collect his scattered thoughts, and in order to try and gain some composure, he altered his former plan of acting, and mingled as much as possible in society; he strove to fly from himself, that by so doing he might fly from the corrosive remembrances which embittered his life. But who shall paint his agonies at the unexpected sight of Amanda at the Macqueens! The exertions he had for some time before compelled himself to make, had a little abated the pain of his feelings, but that pain returned with redoubled violence at her presence, and every idea of present composure or future tranquillity vanished. He felt, with regret, with anguish, that she was as dear as ever to his soul, and his destined union became more hateful than ever to him. He tried, by recollecting her conduct, to awaken his resentment; but alas! softness, in spite of all his efforts to the contrary, was the predominant feeling of his soul. Her pallid cheek, her deep dejection, seemed to say she was the child of sorrow and repentance. To sooth that sorrow, to strengthen that repentance, oh!

how delightful unto him ; but either he durst not do, situated as he then was.

With the utmost difficulty lady Martha Dormer prevailed on him to be present, when she demanded the picture from Amanda. That scene has already been described, also his parting one with her ; but to describe the anguish he endured after this period, is impossible. He beheld lady Euphrasia with a degree of horror ; his faltering voice refused even to pay her the accustomed compliments of meeting ; he loathed the society he met at the castle ; and regardless of what might be thought of him, regardless of health, or the bleakness of the season, wandered for hours together in the most unfrequented parts of the domain, the veriest son of wretchedness and despair.

The day, the dreaded day at length arrived which was to complete his misery. The company were all assembled in the great hall of the castle, from whence they were to proceed to the chapel, and every moment expected the appearance of the bride. The marquis, surprised at her long delay, sent a messenger, to request her immediate presence, who returned in a few minutes with a letter which he presented to the marquis, who broke the seal in visible trepidation, and found it from lady Euphrasia.

“ She had taken a step,” she said, “ which she must depend on the kind indulgence of her parents to excuse, a step which nothing but a firm conviction, that happiness could not be experienced in a union with lord Mortimer, should have tempted her to. His uniform indifference had, at last, convinced her, that motives of the most interested nature influenced his addresses to her, and if her parents inquired into his, or at least lord Cherbury’s conduct, they would find her assertion true, and would consequently, she trusted, excuse her for not submitting to be sacrificed at the shrine of interest. In selecting Mr. Freelove for her choice, she had selected a man, whose addresses were not prompted by selfish views, but by a sincere affection, which he

would openly have avowed, had he not been assured, in the present situation of affairs, it would have met with opposition. To avoid, therefore, a positive act of disobedience, she had consented to a private union. To lord Mortimer and lord Cherbury," she said, "she deemed no apology necessary for her conduct, as their hearts, at least lord Cherbury's, would at once exculpate her, from his own consciousness of not having acted either generously or honourably to her."

The violent transports of passion the marquis experienced are not to be described. The marchioness hastily perused the letter, and her feelings were not inferior in violence to his. Its contents were not known, and amazement sat on every countenance. But oh! what joy did they inspire in the soul of lord Mortimer; not a respite, or rather a full pardon to the condemned wretch, at the very moment when preparing for death, could have yielded more exquisite delight; but to lord Cherbury, what a disappointment! it was indeed a death-stroke to his hopes; the hints in lady Euphrasia's letter concerning him, plainly declared her knowledge of his conduct; he foresaw an immediate demand from Freelove; foresaw the disgrace he should experience, when his inability to discharge that demand was known. His soul was shaken in its utmost recesses, and the excruciating anguish of his feelings was indeed as severe a punishment as he could suffer. Pale, speechless, aghast, the most horrid ideas took possession of his mind; yet he sought not to repel them, for any thing was preferable to the shame he saw awaiting him.

Lord Mortimer's indignation was excited by the aspersions cast upon his father, aspersions he imputed entirely to the malice of lady Euphrasia, and which, from the character of lord Cherbury, he deemed it unnecessary to attempt refuting. But alas! what a shock did his noble, his unsuspecting nature receive, when, in a short time after the perusal of her letter, one from Freelove was brought him, which fully proved the truth of her assertions! Freelove, in his little trifling manner,

expressed his hopes that there would be no difference between his lordship and him, for whom he expressed the most entire friendship, on account of the fair lady who had honoured him with her regard; declared her partiality was quite irresistible; and moreover that in love, as in war, every advantage was allowable; begged to trouble his lordship with his compliments to lord Cherbury, and a request that every thing might be prepared to settle matters between them on his return from his matrimonial expedition. An immediate compliance with this request, he was convinced, could not be in the least distressing; and it was absolutely essential to him, from the eclat with which he designed lady Euphrasia Freelove should make her bridal entry into public. As to the report, he said, which he heard relative to lord Cherbury's losing the fortune which was entrusted to his care for him at the gaming table, he quite disbelieved it.

The most distressing, the most mortifying sensations took possession of lord Mortimer at this part of the letter; it explained the reasons of lord Cherbury's strong anxiety for an alliance with the Rosline family, which lord Mortimer indeed had often wondered at, and he at once pitied, condemned, and blushed for him. He stole a glance at his father, and his deep despairing look filled him with horror. He resolved, the first opportunity, to declare his knowledge of the fatal secret which oppressed him, and his resolution of making any sacrifice which could possibly remove or lessen his inquietude.

Lord Cherbury was anxious to fly from the now hated castle, ere farther confusion overtook him. He mentioned his intention of immediately departing, an intention opposed by the marquis, but in which he was steady, and also supported by his son.

Every thing was ready for their departure, when lord Cherbury, overwhelmed by the dreadful agitations he experienced, was seized with a fit of the most violent and alarming nature; he was carried to a chamber, and recourse was obliged to be had to a physician, ere the

restoration of his senses were effected ; but he was then so weak, that the physician declared, if not kept quiet, a return of his disorder might be expected.

Lord Mortimer, tenderly impatient to lighten the burthen of his father's mind, dismissed the attendants as soon as he possibly could, and then in the most delicate terms declared his knowledge of his situation.

Lord Cherbury at this started up in the most violent paroxysm of anguish, and vowed he would never survive the discovery of his being a villain. With difficulty could lord Mortimer compose him; but it was long ere he could prevail on him to hear what he wished to say.

Few there were, he said, who at some period of their lives, he believed, were not led into actions which upon reflection they had reason to regret; he thought not, he meant not to speak slightly of human nature, he only wished to prove, that liable as we all are to frailty—a frailty intended no doubt to check the arrogance of pride and presumption, we should not suffer the remembrance of error, when once sincerely repented of, to plunge us into despair, particularly when, as far as in our power, we meant to atone for it."

Thus did lord Mortimer attempt to calm the dreadful conflicts of his father's mind, who still continued to inveigh against himself.

"The sale of Tudor Hall," lord Mortimer proceeded, "and mortgages upon lord Cherbury's estates, would enable his father to discharge his debt to Mr. Freelove. He knew," he said, "it was tenderness to him which had prevented him ere this from adopting such a plan; but he besought him to let no farther consideration on his account make him delay fulfilling immediately the claims of honour and justice. He besought him to believe his tranquillity was more precious to him than any thing in life, that the restoration of his peace was far more estimable to him than the possession of the most brilliant fortune; a possession which," continued lord Mortimer, deeply sighing, "I am well convinced, will not alone yield happiness. I have long," said he, "looked with an eye of cool indifference on the pompa

the pageantries of life: disappointed in my tenderest hopes and expectations, wealth, merely on my own account, has long been valueless to me: its loss, I make no doubt, nay, I am convinced, I shall have reason to consider as a blessing; it will compel me to make those exertions which its possession would have rendered unnecessary, and, by so doing, in all probability, remove from my heart that sadness which has so long clung about it, and enervated all its powers. A profession lies open to receive me, which, had I been permitted, at a much earlier period I should have embraced, for a military life was always my passion. At the post of danger I may perhaps have the happiness of performing services for my country, which, while loitering supinely in the shade of prosperity I never could have done. Thus, my dear father," he continued, "you see how erroneous we are in the opinions we often form of things, since what we often consider as the bitterest evil leads to the most supreme good. We will, as soon as possible, hasten every thing to be prepared for Freelove, and thus, I make no doubt, disappoint the little malice of his soul.

"My aunt, my sister, are unacquainted with your uneasiness, nor shall an intimation of it from me ever transpire to them; of fortune, sufficient will remain to allow, though not the splendours, the comforts and elegancies of life. As for me, the deprivation of what is considered, and falsely termed, my accustomed indulgencies, will be the most salutary and efficacious thing that could possibly happen to me. In short, I believe that the realization of my plan will render me happy, since, with truth I can assure you, its anticipation has already given more pleasure to my soul than I thought it would ever have again enjoyed."

Lord Cherbury, overcome by the tenderness, the virtue of his son, by the sacrifice he so willingly offered, so strenuously insisted on making, of his paternal fortune, could not for some minutes speak. At length the struggling emotions of his soul found utterance.

"Oh! virtue!" he exclaimed, while tears of love, of gratitude, of contrition, flowed from his eyes, and fell

upon the hand of his son, clasped within his, "oh! virtue! I cannot say, like Brutus, thou art but a shade; no, here, in this invaluable son, thou art personified—this son whom I so cruelly deceived, so bitterly distressed.—Oh! gracious powers! would not that heroic, that heaven-born disposition which now leads him to sign away his paternal fortune for my sake, have also led him to a still greater resignation—the sacrifice of his Amanda, had I entrusted him with my wretched situation? Oh! had I confided in him, what an act of baseness should I have prevented his experiencing! but, to save my own guilty confusion, I drew wretchedness upon his head; I wrung every fibre of his heart with agony, by making him believe its dearest, its most valuable object unworthy of its regard."

Mortimer started—he gasped—he repeated, in faltering accents, these last words; his soul seemed as if it would burst its mortal bounds, and soar to another region to hear an avowal of his Amanda's purity.

"Oh! Mortimer!" cried the earl, in the deep desponding tone of anguish, "how shall I dare to lift my eyes to thine, after the avowal of the injustice I have done one of the most amiable and loveliest of human beings?"

"Oh! tell me," cried Mortimer, in breathless, trembling agitation, "tell me if indeed she is all my fond heart once believed her to be; in mercy, in pity, delay not to inform me."

Slowly, in consequence of his weakness, but with all the willingness of a contrite spirit anxious to do justice to the injured, did lord Cherbury reveal all that had passed between him and Amanda. "Poor Fitzalan!" cried he, as he finished his relation, "poor, unhappy friend! from thy cold grave couldst thou have known the transactions of this world, how must thy good and feeling spirit have reproached me for my barbarity to thy orphan, in robbing her of the only stipend thy adverse fortune had power to leave her—a pure and spotless fame!"

Lord Mortimer groaned with anguish ; every reproachful word he had uttered to Amanda darted upon his remembrance, and were like so many daggers to his heart. It was his father that oppressed her : this knowledge aggravated his feelings, but stifled his reproaches ; it was a father contrite, perhaps at that very moment stretched upon a death-bed—therefore he forgave him.

He cast his eyes around, as if in that moment he had hoped to behold her, have an opportunity of falling prostrate at her feet, and imploring her forgiveness : he cast his eyes around, as if imagining he should see her, and be allowed to fold her to his beating heart, and ask her soft voice to pronounce his pardon.

“ Oh ! thou lovely mourner,” he exclaimed to himself, while a gush of sorrow burst from his eyes, “ oh ! thou lovely mourner, when I censured, reviled, upbraided you, even at that very period your heart was suffering the most excruciating anguish : yes, Amanda, he who would willingly have laid down life to yield thee peace, even he was led to aggravate thy woes. With what gentleness, what unexampled patience didst thou bear my reproaches ! no sudden ray of indignation for purity so insulted, innocence so arraigned, flashed from thy eyes ; the beams of meekness and resignation alone stole from beneath their tearful lids.

“ No sweet hope of being able to atone, no delightful idea of being able to make reparation for my injustice, now alleviates the poignancy of my feelings ; since fate interposed between us in the hour of prosperity, I cannot, in the bleak and chilling period of adversity, seek to unite your destiny with mine ;—now almost a child of want myself, a soldier of fortune, obliged by the sword to earn bread, I cannot think of leading you into difficulties and dangers greater than you ever before experienced. Oh ! my Amanda, may the calm shade of security be for ever thine ; thy Mortimer, thy ever faithful, ever adoring Mortimer will not, from any selfish consideration, seek to lead thee from it. If thy loss be agonizing, oh ! how

much more agonizing to possess, but to see thee in danger or distress: I will go then into new scenes of life, with only thy dear, thy sweet and worshipped idea to cheer and support me; an idea I shall lose but with life, and which to know I may cherish, indulge, adore, without a reproach from reason for weakness in so doing, is a sweet and soothing consolation."

The indulgence of feelings, such as his language expressed, he was obliged to forego, in order to fulfil the wish he felt of alleviating the situation of his father: but his attention was unable to lighten the anguish which oppressed the mind of lord Cherbury; remorse for his past conduct, mortification at being lessened in the estimation of his son, sorrow for the injury he was compelled to do him, to be extricated from the power of Frelove, all preying upon his mind, produced the most violent agitations, and an alarming repetition of fits.

Things remained in this situation for a few days, during which time no intelligence had been received of Euphrasia, when one morning, when lord Mortimer was sitting for a few minutes with the marquis and marchioness, a servant entered the apartment, and informed his lord that a gentleman was just arrived at the castle, who requested to be introduced to his presence. The marquis and marchioness instantly concluded this was some person sent as an intercessor from lady Euphrasia, and they instantly admitted him, in order to have an opportunity of assuring her ladyship, through his means, it must be some time (if indeed at all) ere they could possibly forgive her disrespect and disobedience.

Lord Mortimer would have retired, but was requested to stay, and complied, prompted indeed by curiosity to hear what kind of apology or message lady Euphrasia had sent. A man of a most pleasing appearance entered, and was received with the most frigid politeness. He looked embarrassed, agitated, even distressed. He attempted several times to speak, but the words still died away undistinguished. At length the marchioness, yielding to the natural impetuosity of her soul, hastily desired

he would reveal what had procured them the honour of his visit.

"A circumstance of the most unhappy nature, madam," he replied, in a hesitating voice; "I came with the hope, the expectation of being able to break it by degrees, so as not totally to overpower; but I find myself unequal to the distressing task."

"I fancy, sir," cried the marchioness, "both the marquis and I are already aware of the circumstance you allude to."

"Alas! madam," said the stranger, fixing his eyes with a mournful earnestness on her face; "I cannot think so; if you were, it would not be in human, in paternal nature to appear as you now do." He stopped—he turned pale—he trembled: his emotions became contagious.

"Tell me," said the marquis, in a voice scarcely articulate, "I beseech you, without delay, the meaning of your words."

The stranger essayed to speak, but could not; words indeed were scarcely necessary to declare that he had something shocking to reveal. His auditors, like old Northumberland, might have said, "The paleness on thy cheeks is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand."

"Something dreadful has happened to my child," said the marchioness, forgetting at that agonizing moment all displeasure.

"Alas! madam," cried the stranger, while a trickling tear denoted his sensibility for the sorrows he was about giving rise to; "alas! madam, your fears are too well founded; to torture you with longer suspense would be barbarity: something dreadful has happened indeed—lady Euphrasia in this world will never more be sensible of your kindness." A wild, a piercing, agonizing shriek burst from the lips of the marchioness as she dropped senseless from her seat. The marquis was sinking from his, had not lord Mortimer, who sat by him, timely started up, and, though trembling himself with horror, caught him in his arms. The servants were summoned; the still insensible marchioness was carried to her chamber;

the wretched marquis, reviving in a few minutes, if that could be called reviving which was only a keener perception of misery, demanded, in a tone of anguish, the whole particulars of the sad event; yet scarcely had the stranger began to comply with his request, ere, with all the wild inconsistency of grief, he bid him to forbear, and, shuddering, declared he could not listen to the dreadful particulars. But it were needless, as well as impossible to describe the feelings of the wretched parents, who in one moment beheld their hopes, their wishes, their expectations finally destroyed: oh! what an awful lesson did they inculcate of the instability of human happiness, of the insufficiency of rank or riches to retain it. This was one of the events which Providence, in its infinite wisdom, makes use of to arrest the thoughtless in their career of dissipation, and check the arrogance of pride and vanity. When we behold the proud, the wealthy, the illustrious suddenly surprised by calamity, and sinking beneath its stroke, we naturally reflect on the frail tenure of earthly possessions, and from the reflection consider how we may best attain that happiness which cannot change. The human heart is in general so formed as to require something great to interest and affect it. Thus, a similar misfortune happening to a person in a conspicuous, and to one in an obscure situation, would not, in all probability, equally affect or call home the wandering thoughts to sadness and reflection. The humble floweret trampled to the dust is passed on with an eye of careless indifference; but the proud oak, torn from the earth and levelled by the storm, is viewed with wonder and affright. The horrors of the blow which overwhelmed the marquis and marchioness were augmented by the secret whispers of conscience, that seemed to say it was a blow of retribution from a Being all righteous and all just, whose most sacred laws they had violated, in oppressing the widow and defrauding the orphan. Oh! what an augmentation of misery is it to think it merited; remorse, like the vengeance of heaven, seemed awakened now to sleep more; no longer could they palliate their conduct, no

longer avoid retrospection, a retrospection which heightened the gloomy horrors of the future. In lady Euphrasia all the hopes, the affections of the marquis and marchioness were centered; she alone had ever made them feel the tenderness of humanity; yet she was not less the darling of their love, than the idol of their pride: in her they beheld the being who was to support the honours of their house, and transmit their names to posterity; in her they beheld the being who gave them an opportunity of gratifying the malevolent, as well as tender and ambitious passions of their souls; the next heir to the marquis's title and fortune had irreconcilably disobliged him; as a means therefore of disappointing him, if on no other account, lady Euphrasia would have been regarded by them

Though she had disappointed and displeased them by her recent act of disobedience, and though they had deemed it essential to their consequence to display that displeasure, yet they secretly resolved not long to withhold forgiveness from her, and also to take immediate steps for ennobling Freelove.

For lady Euphrasia they felt indeed a tenderness, her heart for them was totally a stranger to; it seemed indeed as if cold and indifferent to all mankind, their affections were stronger for being confined in one channel. In the step she had taken, lady Euphrasia only considered the gratification of her revenge. Freelove, as the ward of lord Cherbury, in honour to him had been invited to the nuptials; he accepted the invitation, but instead of accompanying, promised to follow the bridal party to the castle. A day or two ere he intended setting out, by some accidental chance, he got into company with the very person to whom lord Cherbury had lost so much, and on whose account he had committed an action which had entailed the most excruciating remorse upon him; this person was acquainted with the whole transaction; he had promised to keep his knowledge secret, but the promises of the worthless are of little avail. A slight expression which, in a moment of anxiety, had involuntarily dropped from lord Cherbury, had stung him to the

soul, because he knew too well its justice, and inspired him with the most inveterate hatred and rancorous desire of revenge. His unexpectedly meeting Freeloze afforded him an opportunity of gratifying both these propensities, and he scrupled not to avail himself of it. Freeloze was astonished, and when the first violence of astonishment was over, delighted.

To triumph over the proud soul of lord Cherbury and his son, was indeed an idea which afforded rapture; both he had ever disliked, the latter particularly: he disliked him from the superiority which he saw in every respect he possessed over himself. A stranger to noble emulation, he sought not by study or imitation to aspire to any of those graces or perfections he beheld in lord Mortimer, he sought alone to depreciate them, and when he found that impossible, beheld him with greater envy and malignity than ever. To wound lord Mortimer through the bosom of his father, to overwhelm him with confusion, by publicly displaying the error of that father, were ideas of the most exquisite delight—ideas which the wealth of worlds would scarcely have tempted him to forego; so sweet is any triumph, however accidental or imaginary, over a noble object to an envious mind, which ever hates that excellence it cannot reach. No fear of self-interest being injured checked his pleasure: the fortune of lord Cherbury he knew sufficient to answer for his violating trust; thus had he another source of triumph in the prospect of having those, so long considered as the proud rivals of his wealth and splendor, cast into the shade: his pleasure, however, from this idea was short-lived, when he reflected that lord Mortimer's union with lady Euphrasia would totally exempt him from feeling any inconveniency from his father's conduct: but could not this union be prevented? Freeloze asked himself; he still wanted a short period of being of age, consequently had no right at present to demand a settlement of his affairs from lord Cherbury; he might, however, privately inform lady Euphrasia of the affair so recently communicated to him. No sooner did he conceive this scheme, than he glowed with impatience to put it in exe-

cution; he hastened to the marquis's, whither, indeed, the extravagant and foppish preparations he had made for the projected nuptials had before prevented his going, and took the first opportunity which offered of revealing to lady Euphrasia, as if from the purest friendship, the conduct of lord Cherbury and the derangement of his affairs.

Lady Euphrasia was at once surprised and incensed; the reason for a union between her and his son being so ardently desired by lord Cherbury, was now fully explained, and she beheld herself as an object addressed merely from a view of repairing a ruined fortune; but this view she resolved to disappoint. Such was the implacable nature of her disposition, that had this disappointment occasioned the destruction of her own peace, it would not have made her relinquish it, but this was not the case; in sacrificing all ideas of a union with lord Mortimer to her offended pride, she sacrificed no wish or inclination of her soul. Lord Mortimer, though the object of her admiration, had never been the object of her love; she was indeed incapable of feeling that passion; her admiration had, however, long since given place to resentment, at the cool indifference with which he regarded her; she would have opposed a marriage with him, but for a fear that he might, thus freed, attach himself to Amanda. The moment, however, she knew a union with her was necessary for the establishment of his fortune, fear, with every consideration which could oppose it, vanished before the idea of disappointing his views and retaliating upon him that uneasiness he had, from wounded pride, made her experience by his cold and unaltered behaviour to her.

She at first determined to acquaint the marquis of what she had heard, but a little reflection made her drop this determination. He had always professed a warm regard for lord Cherbury, and she feared that regard would still lead him to insist on the nuptials taking place; she was not long concerting a scheme to render such a measure impracticable, and Free love she resolved to make an in-

strument for forwarding, or rather executing her revenge. She hesitated not to say she had always disliked lord Mortimer, that, in short, there was but one being she could ever think, ever hope to be happy with. Her broken sentences, her looks, her affected confusion, all revealed to Freelove that he was that object; the rapture this discovery inspired he could not conceal; the flattering expressions of lady Euphrasia were repaid by the most extravagant compliments, the warmest professions, the strongest assurances of never-dying love; this soon led to what she desired, and in a short space an elopement was agreed to, and every thing relative to it settled. Freelove's own servants and equipage were at the castle, and consequently but little difficulty attended the arrangement of their plan. In lady Euphrasia's eyes, Freelove had no other value than what he now merely derived from being an instrument in gratifying the haughty and revengeful passions of her nature. She regarded him indeed with sovereign contempt; his fortune, however, she knew would give him consequence in the world, and she was convinced she should find him quite that easy convenient husband, which a woman of fashion finds so necessary: in short, she looked forward to being the uncontrolled mistress of her own actions, and without a doubt but that she should meet many objects as deserving her admiration, and infinitely more grateful for it, than ever lord Mortimer had been.

Flushed with such pleasing prospects she quitted the castle—that castle she was destined never more to see; at the moment, the very moment she smiled with joy and expectation, the shaft, the unerring shaft was raised against her breast.

The marriage ceremony over, they hastened to the vicinity of the castle, in order to send an apologizing letter, as usual on such occasions. The night was dark and dreary, the road rugged and dangerous; the postillions ventured to say, it would be better to halt for the night, but this was opposed by lady Euphrasia. They were within a few miles of the destined termination of their journey, and pursuant to her commands they pro-

ceeded. In a few minutes after this the horses, startled by a sudden light which gleamed across the path, began plunging in the most alarming manner. A frightful precipice lay on one side, and the horses, in spite of all the efforts of the postillions, continued to approach it. Freelove, in this dreadful moment, lost all consideration but for himself—he burst open the chariot-door, and leaped into the road. His companion was unable to follow his example; she had fainted at the first intimation of danger. The postillions with difficulty dismounted: the other servants came to their assistance, and endeavoured to restrain the horses. Every effort was useless; they broke from their hold, and plunged down the precipice. The servants had heard the chariot-door open; they therefore concluded (for it was too dark to see) that both their master and lady Euphrasia were safe. But who can describe their horror when a loud shriek from him declared her situation. Some of them immediately hastened, as fast as their trembling limbs could carry them, to the house adjoining the road, from whence the fatal light had gleamed, which caused the sad catastrophe. They revealed it in a few words, and implored immediate assistance. The master of the house was a man of the greatest humanity; he was inexpressibly shocked at what he had heard, and joined himself in giving the assistance that was desired.

With lanthorns they proceeded down a winding path, cut in the precipice, and soon discovered the objects of their search. The horses were already dead; the chariot was shattered to pieces. They took up some of the fragments, and discovered beneath them the lifeless body of the unfortunate lady Euphrasia.

The stranger burst into tears at a sight of so much horror, and, in a voice scarcely audible, gave orders for her being conveyed to his house; but, when a better light gave a more perfect view of the mangled remains, all acknowledged that, since so fatal an accident had befallen her, Heaven was merciful in taking a life whose continuance would have made her endure the most excruciating tortures.

Freelove was now enquired for : he had fainted on the road, but, in a few minutes after he was brought in, recovered his senses, and the first use he made of them was to enquire whether he was dead or alive. Upon receiving the comfortable assurance of the latter he congratulated himself, in a manner so warm, upon his escape, as plainly proved self was his whole and sole consideration: No great preparations, on account of his feelings, was requisite to inform him of the fate of lady Euphrasia : he shook his head on hearing it—said it was what he already guessed, from the devilish plunge of the horses—declared it was a most unfortunate affair, and expressed a kind of terror at what the marquis might say to it, as if he could have been accused of being accessory to it.

Mr. Murray, the gentleman whose house had received him, offered to undertake the distressing task of breaking the affair to lady Euphrasia's family—an offer Freelove gladly accepted, declaring he felt himself too much disordered in mind and body to be able to give any directions relative to what was necessary to be done.

How Mr. Murray executed his task is already known ; but it was long ere the emotions of the marquis would suffer him to say he wished the remains of lady Euphrasia to be brought to the castle, that all the honours due to her birth should be paid them. This was accordingly done, and the castle, so lately ornamented for her nuptials, was hung with black and all the pageantries of death.

The marquis and marchioness confined themselves, in the deepest anguish, to their apartments: their domestics, filled with terror and amazement, glided about like pale spectres, and all was a scene of solemnity and sadness.

Every moment lord Mortimer could spare from his father he devoted to the marquis. Lady Euphrasia had ever been an object of indifference, nay, of dislike to him ; but the manner of her death, notwithstanding, shocked him to the soul ; his dislike was forgotten ; he thought of her only with pity and compassion, and the

tears he mingled with the marquis were the tears of unfeigned sympathy and regret.

Lady Martha and lady Araminta were equally attentive to the marchioness; the time not spent with lord Cherbury was devoted to her. They used not unavailing arguments to conquer a grief which nature as her rightful tribute demands; but they soothed that grief, by showing they sincerely mourned its source.

Lord Cherbury had but short intervals of reason; those intervals were employed by lord Mortimer in trying to compose his mind, and by him in blessing his son for those endeavours, and congratulating himself on the prospect of approaching dissolution.

His words unutterably affected lord Mortimer; he had reason to believe they were dictated by a prophetic spirit, and the dismal peal which rung from morning till night for lady Euphrasia sounded in his ear as the knell of his expiring father.

Things were in this situation in the castle when Oscar and his friend, sir Charles Bingley, arrived at it, and, without sending in their names, requested immediate admission to the marquis's presence, upon business of importance.

Their request was complied with, from an idea that they came from Freelove, to whom the marquis and marchioness, from respect and affection to the memory of their daughter, had determined to pay every attention.

The marquis knew and was personally known to sir Charles: he was infinitely surprised by his appearance; but how much was that surprise increased when sir Charles, taking Oscar by the hand, presented him to the marquis as the son of lady Fitzalan, the rightful heir of the earl of Dunreath!

The marquis was confounded; he trembled at these words, and his confusion, had such a testimony been wanting, would have been sufficient to prove his guilt.

He at last, though with a faltering voice, desired to know by what means sir Charles could justify or support his assertion.

Sir Charles (for Oscar was too much agitated to speak) as briefly as possible related all the particulars which had led to the discovery of the earl's will, and his friend, he added, with the generosity of a noble mind, wished as much as possible to spare the feelings and save the honour of those with whom he was connected, with which nothing but a hesitation in complying with his just and well supported claim could destroy.

The marquis's agitation increased: already was he stripped of happiness, and he now saw himself on the point of being stripped of honour. An hour before he had imagined his wretchedness could not be augmented; he was now convinced human misery cannot be complete without the loss of reputation. In the idea of being esteemed, of being thought undeserving our misfortunes, there is a sweet, a secret balm, which meliorates the greatest sorrow. Of riches, in his own right, the marquis ever possessed more than sufficient for all his expenses; those expenses would now, comparatively speaking, be reduced within very narrow bounds; for the vain pride which had led him to delight in pomp and ostentation died with lady Euphrasia. Since therefore of his fortune such a superabundance would remain, it was unnecessary, as well as unjust, to detain what he had no pretensions to: but he feared tamely acquiescing to this unexpected claim, would be to acknowledge himself a villain: 'tis true, indeed, that his newly-felt remorse had inspired him with a wish of making reparation for his past injustice; but false shame, starting up, hitherto opposed it—and even now, when an opportunity offered of accomplishing his wish, still continued to oppose it, lest the scorn and contempt he dreaded should at length be his portion for his long injustice.

Irresolute how to act, he sat for some time silent and embarrassed, till at last recollecting his manner was probably betraying what he wished to conceal, namely, his knowledge of the will, he said, with some sternness, "that, till he inspected into the affairs so recently laid before him, he could not, nor was it to be expected he

should, say how he would act; an inspection which, under the melancholy circumstances he then laboured, he could not possibly make for some time. Had Mr. Fitzalan," he added, "possessed in reality that generosity sir Charles' partiality ascribed to him, he would not, at a period so distressing, have appeared to make such a claim. To delicacy and sensibility the privileges of grief were ever held sacred; those privileges they had both violated; they had intruded on his sorrows, they had even insulted him, by appearing on such a business before him, ere the last rites were paid to his lamented child."

Sir Charles and Oscar were inexpressibly shocked; both were totally ignorant of the recent event.

Oscar, as he recovered from the surprise the marquis's words had given him, declared, in the impassioned language of a noble mind hurt by being thought destitute of sensibility, "that the marquis had arraigned him unjustly: had he known of his sorrows," he said, "nothing should have tempted him to intrude upon them; he mourned, he respected them: he besought him to believe him sincere in what he uttered." A tear, an involuntary tear, as he spoke, started into his eye, and, trickling down his cheek, denoted his sincerity.

The marquis's heart smote him as he beheld this tear; it reproached him more than the keenest words could have done, and operated more in Oscar's favour than any arguments, however eloquent.

Had this young man, thought he, been really illiberal, when I reproached him for want of sensibility, how well might he have retaliated upon me my more flagrant want of justice and humanity! but no, he sees I am a son of sorrow, and he will not break the reed which Heaven has already smitten.

Tears gushed from his eyes; he involuntarily extended his hand to Oscar: "I see," said he, "I see, indeed, I have unjustly arraigned you, but I will endeavour to atone for my error; at present rest satisfied with an assurance, that whatever is equitable shall be done, and that, let events turn out as they may, I shall ever feel

myself your friend." Oscar again expressed his regret for having waited on him at such a period, and requested he would dismiss for the present the subject they had been talking of from his mind: the marquis, still more pleased with his manner, desired his direction, and assured him he should hear from him sooner than he expected.

As soon as they retired his agitation decreased, and of course he was better qualified to consider how he should act: that restitution his conscience prompted, but his false ideas of shame had prevented, he now found he should be compelled to make; how to make it, therefore, so as to avoid total disgrace, was what he considered. At last he adopted a scheme, which the sensibility of Oscar, he flattered himself, would enable him to accomplish: this was to declare, that, by the earl of Dunreath's will, Mr. Fitzalan was heir to his estates, in case of the death of lady Euphrasia; that, in consequence, therefore, of this event, he had come to take possession of them; that lady Dunreath (whose residence at Dunreath Abbey he could not now hope to conceal) was but lately returned from a convent in France, where for many years she had resided. To Oscar he intended saying, from her ill conduct he and the marchioness had been tempted to sequester her from the world, in order to save her from open shame and derision, and that her declaration of a will they had always believed the mere fabrication of her brain, in order, as he supposed, to give them uneasiness. This scheme once formed, his heart felt a little relieved of the heavy burthen of fear and inquietude. He repaired to the marchioness's apartment, and bro't the affair gently to her, adding, at the same time, that, sensible as they now must be of the vanities and pursuits of human life, it was time for them to endeavour to make their peace with heaven. Affliction had taught penitence to the marchioness as well as to her husband: she approved of his scheme, and thought with him, that the sooner their intention of making restitution was known, the greater would be the probability of its being accomplished: Oscar, therefore, the next day, received a letter

from the marquis, specifying at once his intention and his wishes. With those wishes Oscar generously complied; his noble soul was superior to a triumph over a fallen enemy; and he had always wished rather to save from, than expose the marquis to disgrace; he hastened as soon as possible to the castle, agreeable to a request contained in the letter, to assure the marquis his conduct throughout the whole affair should be regulated according to his desire.

Perhaps, at this moment, public contempt could not have humbled the marquis more than such generosity, when he drew a comparison between himself and the person he had so long injured; the striking contrast wounded his very soul, and he groaned at the degradation he suffered in his own eyes. He told Oscar, as soon as the last sad duties were performed to his daughter, he would settle every thing with him, and then, perhaps, be able to introduce him to the marchioness. He desired he might take up his residence in the castle, and expressed a wish that he would attend the funeral of lady Euphrasia as one of the chief mourners. Oscar declined the former; but promised with a faltering voice to comply with the latter request. He then retired, and the marquis, who had been roused from the indulgence of his grief by a wish of preserving his character, again relapsed into its wretchedness. He desired Oscar to make no secret of his now being heir to the earl of Dunreath, and said he would mention it himself in his family; through this medium, therefore, did this surprising intelligence reach lord Mortimer, and his heart dilated with sudden joy at the idea of his Amanda and her brother at last enjoying independence and prosperity.

In a few hours after this the sufferings of lord Cherbury were terminated; his last faltering accents pronounced blessings on his son. Oh! how sweet were these blessings—how different were the feelings of lord Mortimer from the callous sons of dissipation, who seem to watch with impatience the last struggles of a parent, that they may have more extensive means of gratifying their inordinate desires. The feelings of lord Mortimer

were soothed, by reflecting that he had done every thing in his power for restoring the tranquillity of his father, and his regret was lessened by the conviction that lord Cherbury, after the discovery of his conduct, could never more in this life have experienced happiness ; he, therefore, with tender piety, resigned him to his God, humbly trusting that his penitence had atoned for his frailties, and insured him felicity.

He now bid adieu to the castle and its wretched owners, and accompanied lady Martha and his sister to Thornbury, at which the burying-place of the family lay. Here he continued till the remains of his father arrived, and were interred ; he then proceeded to London, to put into execution the plan he had projected for his father. He immediately advertised the Tudor estate ; a step of this kind could not be concealed from lady Martha ; but the mortgages on the other estates he resolved carefully to guard from her knowledge, lest suspicions, prejudicial to the memory of his father, would arise in her mind : but during this period the idea of Amanda was not absent from his soul ; neither grief nor business could banish it a moment, and again a thousand fond and flattering hopes concerning her had revived, when a sudden blow dispersed them all, and plunged him, if possible, in greater wretchedness than he had ever before experienced. He heard it confidently reported, that the earl of Dunreath's sister (for Oscar had by this time claimed, and been allowed to take the title of his grandfather) was to be married to sir Charles Bingley : the friendship which he knew subsisted between the earl and sir Charles rendered this too probable ; but if a doubt concerning it still lingered in his mind, it was destroyed, when sir Charles waited on him to treat about the purchase of Tudor-Hall, it instantly occurring that this purchase was made by the desire of Amanda. Unable to command his feelings, he referred sir Charles to his agent, and abruptly retired. He called her cruel and ungrateful ; after all his sufferings on her account, did he deserve so soon to be banished her remembrance, so soon supplanted in her affections by another, by one too who never had,

who never would have an opportunity of giving such proofs as he had done of constancy and love? She is lost then! he sighed, she is lost for ever! Oh! what avails the vindication of her fame? Is it not an augmentation of my misery? Oh! my father, of what a treasure did you despoil me! but let me not disturb the sacred ashes of the dead—rest—rest—in peace—thou venerable author of my being, and may the involuntary expression of heart-rending anguish be forgiven! Amanda, then, he continued, after a pause, will indeed be mistress of Tudor-Hall; but never will a sigh for him who once was its owner heave her bosom; she will wander beneath those shades, where so often she has heard my vows of unalterable love—vows, which, alas! my heart has too fully observed, and listen to similar ones from sir Charles: well, this is the last stroke fate can level at my peace.

Lord Mortimer (or, as in future we must style him, lord Cherbury) had indeed imagined that the affections of Amanda, like his own, were unalterable; he had therefore indulged the rapturous idea, that, by again seeking a union with her, he should promote the happiness of both. It is true, he knew she would possess a fortune infinitely superior to what he had now a right to expect; but after the proofs he had given of disinterested attachment, not only she, but the world, he was convinced, would acquit him of any selfish motives in the renewal of his addresses. His hopes destroyed, his prospects blasted, by what he heard, he resolved as soon as his affairs were settled to go abroad. The death of his father had rendered his entering the army unnecessary, and his spirits were too much broken, his health too much impaired, for him voluntarily now to embrace that destiny.

On the purchase of Tudor-Hall being completed by sir Charles, it was necessary for lord Cherbury to see his steward; he preferred going to sending for him, prompted indeed by a melancholy wish of paying a last visit to Tudor-Hall, endeared to his heart by a thousand fond remembrances. On his arrival, he took up his abode

at the steward's for a day or two, after a strict injunction to him of concealing his being there; it was after a ramble through every spot about the demesne, which he had ever trodden with Amanda, that he repaired to the library and discovered her; he was ignorant of her being in the country.—Oh! then, how great was his surprise,—how exquisite his emotions at her unexpected sight!

I shall not attempt to go over the scene I have already tried to describe; suffice it to say, that the desire she betrayed of hastening from him he imputed to the alteration of her sentiments with respect to him and sir Charles; when undeceived in this respect, his rapture was as great as ever it had before been at the idea of her love, and, like Amanda, he declared his sufferings were now amply rewarded.

CHAP. X.

No, never from this hour to part,
 We'll live and love so true;
 The sigh that rends thy constant heart,
 Shall break thy lover's too.

“**B**UT, my love,” cried lord Chertsey, as he wiped away the tears which pity and horror at the fate of lady Euphrasia had caused Amanda to shed, “will your brother, think you, sanction our happiness? will he, who might aspire so high for a sister, thus at once possessed of beauty and fortune, bestow her on one whose title may now almost be considered as an empty one?”

“Oh! do not wrong his noble nature by such doubt,” exclaimed Amanda; “yes, with pride, with pleasure, with delight, will he bestow his sister upon the esteemed, the beloved of her heart; upon him who, unwarped by narrow prejudice or selfish interest, sought her in the low

shade of obscurity, to lay, all friendless and forlorn as she was, his fortune at her feet.

“ Could he, indeed, be ungrateful to such kindness ; could he attempt to influence me to another choice, my heart would at once repulse the effort, and avow its fixed determination : but he is incapable of such conduct ; my Oscar is all that is generous and feeling : need I say more, than that a spirit congenial to your’s animates his breast ? ”

Lord Cherbury clasped her to his heart : “ dearest, loveliest of human beings,” he exclaimed, “ shall I at length call you mine ? After all my sorrows, my difficulties, shall I indeed receive so precious a reward ? Oh ! wonder not, my Amanda, if I doubt the reality of so sudden a reverse of situation ; I feel as if under the influence of a happy dream ; but, good Heaven ! a dream from which I should never wish to be awakened. ”

Amanda now recollected, that if she staid much longer from the cottage she should have some one coming in quest of her ; she informed lord Cherbury of this, and rose to depart, but he would not suffer her to depart alone, neither did she desire it.

The nurse and her daughter Betsey were in the cottage at her return to it : to describe the surprise of the former at the appearance of lord Cherbury is impossible—a surprise mingled with indignation, at the idea of his falsehood to her darling child ; but, when undeceived in that respect, her transports were of the most extravagant nature.

“ Well, she thanked Heaven,” she said, “ she should now see her tear chilt hold up her head again, and look as handsome as ever. Ay, she had always doubted,” she said, “ that his lordship was not one of the false-hearted men she had so often heard her old grandmother talk of. ”

“ My good nurse,” said lord Cherbury, smiling, “ you will then give me your dear child with all your heart ? ”

“ Ay, that I will, my lord,” she replied, “ and this very moment too, if I could. ”

“ Well,” cried Amanda, “ his lordship will be satisfied at present with getting his dinner from you.”

She then desired the things to be brought to the little arbour, already described in the beginning of this book, and proceeded to it with lord Cherbury.

The mention of dinner threw noise and her daughter into universal commotion.

“ Goodluck ! how unfortunate it was she had nothing hot or nice to lay before his lordship ; how could she think he could dine upon cold lamb and sallad ! Well, this was all miss Amanda’s fault, who would never let her do as she wished.”

With the utmost difficulty she was persuaded he could dine upon these things. The cloth was laid upon the flowery turf, beneath the spreading branches of the arbour. The delicacies of the dairy were added to their repast, and Betsey provided a dessert of new fiberts.

Never had lord Cherbury partaken of so delicious a meal ; never had he and Amanda experienced such happiness—a happiness derived from what might be termed the sober certainty of waking bliss. The pleasure, the tenderness of their souls, beamed in expressive glances from their eyes, and they were now more convinced than ever, that the humble scenes of life were best calculated for the promotion of felicity.

Lord Cherbury felt more reconciled than he had done before to the diminution of his fortune ; he yet retained sufficient for the comforts and many of the elegancies of life ; the splendor he lost was insignificant in his eyes ; his present situation proved happiness could be enjoyed without it, and he knew it equally disregarded by his Amanda. He asked himself,

What was the world to them,
Its pomps, its pleasures, and its nonsense all,
Who in each other clasp, whatever fair
High fancy forms, or lavish hearts can wish ?

All nature looked gay and smiling around him ; he inhaled the balmy breath of opening flowers, and through

the verdant canopy he sat beneath, he saw the bright azure of the heavens, and felt the benignant influence of the sun, whose potent beams heightened to glowing luxuriance the beauties of the surrounding landscape. He expressed his feelings to Amanda; he heard her declare the similarity of her's; heard her, with all the sweet enthusiasm of a refined and animated mind, expatiate on the lovely scene around them. Oh! what tender remembrances did it awaken, and what delightful plans of felicity did they sketch. Lord Cherbury would hear from Amanda all she had suffered since their separation; and could his love and esteem have been increased, her patient endurance of the sorrows she repeated would have increased them.

They did not leave the garden till a dusky hue had overspread the landscape. Oh! with what emotions did Amanda watch the setting sun, whose rising beams she had beheld with eyes obscured by tears of sorrow.

As they sat at tea in the room, she could not avoid noticing the alteration in the nurse's dress, who attended; she had put on all her holiday finery, and, to evince her wish of amusing her guests, had sent for the blind harper, whom she stationed outside the cottage. His music drew a number of the neighbouring cottagers about him, and they would soon have led up a dance in the yale, had not the nurse prevented them, lest they should disturb her guests. Lord Cherbury, however, insisted on their being gratified, and sending for his servant, ordered him to provide refreshments for them, and to reward the harper.

He would not leave Amanda till he had her permission to come the next morning, as soon as he could hope to see her; accordingly the first voice she heard on rising was his chatting to the nurse. We may believe she did not spend many minutes at her toilet: the neat simplicity of her dress, indeed, never required she should do so, and in a very short time she joined him. They walked out till breakfast was ready;

Together trod the morning dews, and gather'd
In their prime fresh blooming sweets.

Amanda, in hourly expectation of her brother's arrival, wished, ere he came, to inform the inhabitants of the cottage of the alteration in his fortune. This, with the assistance of lord Cherbury, she took an opportunity of doing in the course of the day to the nurse. Had she been sole relater, she feared she would have been overwhelmed with questions. Joy and wonder were excited in an extreme degree by this relation, and nothing but the nurse's hurry and impatience to communicate it to her family, could have prevented her from asking again and again a repetition of it.

Lord Cherbury now, as on the foregoing day, dined with Amanda; her expectations relative to the speedy arrival of her brother were not disappointed. While sitting after dinner with lord Cherbury in the garden, the nurse, half breathless, came running to tell them, that a superb coach and four, which, to be sure, must be lord Dunreath's, was coming down the road.

Lord Cherbury coloured with emotion. Amanda did not wish he and her brother should meet till she had explained every thing relative to him. By her desire he retired to the valley, to which a winding path from the garden descended, whilst she hurried to the cottage to receive and welcome her beloved brother: their meeting was at once tender and affecting, the faithful Edwins surrounded Oscar with delight and rapture, pouring forth, in their simple style, congratulations on his happy fortune, and their wishes for his long enjoying it. He thanked them with a starting tear of sensibility; he assured them, that their attentions to his dear sister, his lamented parents, his infant years, entitled them to his lasting gratitude. As soon as he and Amanda could disengage themselves from the good creatures, without wounding their feelings, they retired to her room, where Oscar related, as we have already done, all that passed between him and the marquis of Rosline.

As soon as the funeral of lady Euphrasia was over, the marquis, according to his promise, settled every thing with him, and put him into formal possession of Dunreath Abbey. By the marquis's desire he then

waited upon lady Dunreath to inform her she was at liberty, and to request she would not contradict the assertion of having been abroad: Mrs. Bruce had previously informed her of the revolution of affairs. "I own," continued Oscar, "from her cruelty to my mother, and the depravity of her conduct, I was strongly prejudiced against her, attributing, I acknowledge, her doing justice to us, in some degree, to her resentment against the marquis; but the moment I entered her apartment this prejudice vanished, giving place to the softer emotions of pity and tenderness, while a thorough conviction of her sincere repentance broke upon my soul. Though prepared to see a form reduced by affliction and confinement, I was not by any means prepared to see a form so emaciated, so death-like: a faint motion of her head, as I entered, alone proved her existence. Had the world been given to me to do so, I think I could not have broken a silence so awful. At length she spoke, and, in language that pierced my heart, implored my forgiveness for the sufferings she had caused me to endure. Repeatedly I assured her of it; but this rather heightened than diminished her agitation, and tears and sobs spoke the anguish of her soul. "I have lived," she cried, "to justify the ways of Providence to men, and prove that, however calamity may oppress the virtuous, they or their descendants shall at last flourish. I have lived to see my contrite wish accomplished, and the last summons will now be a welcome release." She expressed an ardent desire to see her daughter. "The pitying tears of a mother," she exclaimed, "may be as balm to her wounded heart. Oh! my prophetic words, how often have I prayed that the punishment I then denounced against her might be averted."

"I signified her desire," continued Oscar, "to the marquis. He found the marchioness at first reluctant to it, from a secret dread, I suppose, of seeing an object so injured; but she at last consented, and I was requested to bring lady Dunreath from the abbey, and conduct her to the marchioness's room. I will not attempt to de-

scribe the scene which passed between affection on one hand, and penitence on the other; the marchioness indeed seemed truly penitent—remorse and horror were visible in her countenance, as she gazed upon her injured parent. I begged lady Dunreath, if agreeable to her, still to consider the abbey as her residence; this, however, she declined, and it was determined she should continue with her daughter. Her last moments may, perhaps, be soothed by closing in the presence of her child; but till then, I think, her wretchedness must be aggravated, by beholding that of the marquis's and his wife; their's is that situation where comfort can neither be offered nor suggested; hopeless and incurable is their sorrow, for, to use the beautiful and emphatic words of a late celebrated writer, "The gates of death are shut upon their prospects."

Amanda now, after a little hesitation, proceeded to inform Oscar of her real situation, and intreated him to believe that she never would have had a concealment from him, but for the fear of giving him uneasiness. He folded her to his bosom as she ceased speaking, declared he rejoiced and congratulated her on having found an object so well qualified to make her happy.

"But where is this dear creature?" cried Oscar with some gaiety; "am I to search for him like a favourite sylph in your bouquet, or, with more probability of success, seek him amongst the shades of the garden?"

"Come," said he, "your looks confess our search will not be troublesome." He led her to the garden.—Lord Mortimer, who had lingered near it, saw them approaching. Amanda motioned to him to meet them. He sprung forward, and was instantly introduced by her to lord Dunreath. The reception he met from him was, perhaps, one of the most flattering proofs he could receive of his Amanda's affection; for what but the most animated expressions in his favour could have made lord Dunreath, at the first introduction, address him with all the fervency of friendship? Extremes of joy and sorrow are difficult to describe; I shall therefore, as perfectly conscious of my inability to do justice to the scene which

followed this introduction, pass it over in silence. Lord Dunreath had ordered his equipage and attendants to the village inn, where he himself intended to lodge; but this was prevented by lord Cherbury, who informed him he could be accommodated at his steward's. It was here, when they had retired for the night, that lord Cherbury, having intimated his wishes for an immediate union with Amanda, all the necessary preliminaries were talked over and adjusted, and it was agreed the marriage should take place at the cottage, from whence they should immediately proceed to lady Martha's, and that, to procure a licence, they should both depart the next morning; at breakfast, therefore, Amanda was apprised of their plan, and, though the glow of modesty overspread her face, she did not with affectation object to it.

With greater expedition than Amanda expected, the travellers returned from the journey they had been obliged to take, and at their earnest and united request, without any affectation of modesty, though with its real feelings, Amanda consented that the marriage should take place the day but one after their return.

Howell was sent for, and informed of the hour his services would be required. His mild eyes evinced to Amanda his sincere joy at the termination of her sorrows.

On the destined morning lord Dunreath and his friend went over to the cottage, and in a few minutes were joined by their Amanda, the perfect model of innocence and beauty: she looked indeed the child of sweet simplicity, arrayed with the unstudied elegance of a village maid; she had no ornaments but those which could never decay, namely, modesty and meekness.

Language was inadequate to express the feelings of lord Cherbury; his fine eyes alone could do them justice, alone reveal what might be termed the sacred triumph of his soul, at gaining such a woman. A soft shade of melancholy stole over the fine features of lord Dunreath, as he witnessed the happiness of lord Cherbury; for as his happiness, so might his own have been, but for the blackest perfidy.

As lord Cherbury took the trembling hand of Amanda, to lead her from the cottage, she gave a farewell sigh to a place where, it might be said, her happiness had commenced and was completed.

They walked to the church, followed by the nurse and her family. Some kind hand had strewed lady Malvina's grave with the gayest flowers, and when Amanda reached it, she paused involuntarily for a moment, to invoke the spirits of her parents to bless her union.

Howell was already in the church, waiting to receive them, and the ceremony was begun without delay.— With the truest pleasure did lord Dunreath give his lovely sister to lord Cherbury, and with the liveliest transports did he receive her, as the choicest gift Heaven could bestow.

Tears of sweet sensibility fell from Amanda as lord Cherbury folded her to his bosom as his own Amanda— nor was he less affected; joy of the most rapturous kind agitated his whole soul at the completion of an event so earnestly desired, but so long despaired of. He wiped away her tears, and, when she had received the congratulations of her brother, presented her to the rest of the little group. Their delight, particularly the nurse's, was almost too great for expression.

"Well," she said, sobbing, "thank God her wish was fulfilled: it had been her prayer, night, noon, and morn, to see the daughter of her tear, dear captain Fitzalan greatly married."

Poor Ellen wept well: "Now she should be happy," she said, "since she knew her dear young lady was so."

Amanda, affected by the artless testimonies of affection she received, could only smile upon the faithful creatures.

Lord Cherbury, seeing her inability to speak, took her hand, and said, "Lady Cherbury never will forget the obligations conferred upon miss Fitzalan."

Bridal favours and presents had already been distributed among the Edwins. Howell was handsomely complimented on the occasion, and received some valuable presents from lord Cherbury, as proofs of his sincere

friendship—also money to distribute among the indigent villagers.

His lordship then handed Amanda into his coach, already prepared for its journey to Thornbury, and the little bridal party was followed with the most ardent blessings.

After proceeding a quarter of a mile, they reached Tudor-Hall.

“I wish, my lord,” cried Oscar, as they were driving round the wood, “you would permit me to stop and view the hall, and also accompany me to it.”

Lord Cherbury looked a little embarrassed: he felt a strong reluctance to visit it, when no longer his, yet he could not think of refusing the earl.

Amanda knew his feelings, and wished her brother had not made such a request. No opposition, however, being shown to it, they stopped at the great gate, which opened into the avenue, and alighted. This was a long beautiful walk, cut through the wood, and in a direct line with the house. On either side were little grassy banks, now covered with a profusion of gay flowers, and a thick row of trees, which, waving their old fantastic branches on high, formed a most delightful shade. Honey-suckles twined around many of the trunks, forming in some places luxuriant canopies, and with a variety of aromatic shrubs quite perfumed the air.

It was yet an early hour; the dew therefore still sparkled upon the grass, and every thing looked in the highest verdure. Through vistas in the wood a fine clear river was seen, along whose sides beautiful green slopes were stretched, scattered over with flocks that spread their swelling treasures to the sun. The birds sung sweetly in the embowering recesses of the wood, and so calm, so lovely did the place appear, that lord Cherbury could not refrain a sigh for its loss.

“How delighted,” cried he, casting his fine eyes around, “should I have been still to have cherished those old trees, beneath whose shades some of my happiest hours were past.”

They entered the hall, whose folding door they found open; it was large and gothic; a row of arched windows were on either side, whose recesses were filled with myrtles, roses, and geraniums, which emitted a delicious perfume, and, contrasted with the white walls, gave an appearance of the greatest gaiety to the place.

Oscar led the way to a spacious parlour, at the end of the hall; but how impossible to describe the surprise and pleasure of lord and lady Cherbury, on entering it, at beholding lady Martha and lady Araminta Dörmer.

Lord Cherbury stood transfixed like a statue: the caresses of his aunt and his sister, which were shared between him and his bride, restored him to animation; but, while they returned them, he cast his eyes upon Oscar, and demanded an explanation of the scene.

"I shall give no explanation, my lord," cried Oscar, "till you welcome your friends to your house."

"My house!" repeated lord Cherbury, staring at him.

Lord Dunreath approached; never had he appeared so engaging; the benignant expression his countenance assumed was such as we may suppose an angel, sent from heaven, on benevolent purposes to man, would wear.

"Excuse me, my dear Cherbury," said he, "for suffering you to feel any uneasiness which I could remove; I only did so from an idea of increasing your pleasure hereafter. In Scotland I was informed of your predilection for my sister, by lady Greystock, who, I fancy, you have both some reason to remember; in consequence of which, on seeing Tudor-Hall advertised, I begged sir Charles Bingley to purchase it for me, in his own name, from a presentiment I had that the event I now rejoice at would take place, and from my wish of having a nuptial present for my sister worthy her acceptance: let me," continued he, taking a hand of each, and joining them together, "let me, in this respected mansion, and in the dear presence of those you love, again wish you a continuance of every blessing. May this seat, as heretofore, be the scene of domestic happiness; may it ever be a pleasing abode to the prosperous, and an asylum of comfort to the afflicted."

Lord Cherbury's heart was too full for words: he turned aside to wipe away his starting tears. At last, though in a broken voice, he said, "I cannot speak my feelings."

"Pain me not," cried Oscar, "by attempting to do so. From this moment forget that Tudor-Hall was ever out of your possession, or, if you must remember it, think it restored to you with an incumbrance which half the fashionable men in England would give an estate to get rid of, and this will conquer your too refined feelings."

Lord Cherbury smiled as he looked at the lovely incumbrance which Oscar alluded to.

"And what shall I say to my brother?" cried Amanda, throwing herself into his arms.

"Why, that you will compose your spirits, and endeavour to give a proper welcome to your friends. He presented her to lady Martha and lady Araminta, who again embraced and congratulated her. He then led her to the head of the breakfast table, which was elegantly laid out. The timid bride was assisted in doing the honours by her brother and lord Cherbury. Lady Martha beheld the youthful pair with the truest delight; never before had she seen two, from equal merit and loveliness, so justly formed to make each other happy; never had she seen either to such advantage; the beautiful colouring of health and modesty tinged the soft cheeks of Amanda, and her eyes, through their long lashes, emitted mild beams of pleasure, its brightest glow mantled the cheeks of lord Cherbury, and his eyes were again illumined with all their wonted radiancy.

Oscar was requested to tell particularly how he had arranged his plan, which he accordingly did. He had written to the ladies at Thornbury, informing them of his scheme, and requesting their presence, and on the preceding night they had arrived at the Hall. Lord Dunreath also added, that, from a certainty of its being agreeable to lord Cherbury, he had directed the steward

to reinstate the old servants in their former stations, and also to invite the tenants to a nuptial feast.

Lord Cherbury assured him he had done what was truly grateful to his feelings. A ramble about the garden and shrubberies was proposed, and agreed to after breakfast: in the hall and avenue the servants and tenants were already assembled. Lord Cherbury went among them all, and the grateful joy they expressed at having him again for a master and landlord deeply affected his feelings. He thanked them for their regard, and received their congratulations on his present happiness with that sweetness and affability which always distinguished his manners. The ramble was delightful. When the sun had attained its meridian, they sought the cool shade, and retired to little romantic arbours, o'er-canopied with woodbines, where, as if by the hand of enchantment, they found refreshments laid out: they did not return to the house till they received a summons to dinner, and had then the pleasure of seeing the tenants seated at long tables in the wood, enjoying with unbounded mirth the profusion with which they were covered; and lord Cherbury begged Amanda to observe her nurse seated at the head of one of these tables, with an air of the greatest self-importance. The pride and vanity of this good woman (and she always possessed a large share of both) had been considerable increased from the time her cottage was honoured with such noble guests. When she received an invitation from the steward to accompany the rest of the tenants to the Hall, to celebrate its restoration to lord Cherbury, her joy and exultation knew no bounds; she took care to walk with the wives of some of the most respectable tenants, describing to them all that had passed at the ceremony, and how the earl had first fallen in love with his bride at her cottage, and what trials they had undergone, no doubt to prove their constancy. "Cot pless their hearts," she said to her eager auditors, "she could tell them of such tangers and tifficulties, and tribulations, as would surprise the very souls in their podies. Well, well, it was now her dear chilt's turn to hold up her head with

the highest in the land : and to be sure she might now say, without telling a lie, that her tear ladyship would now make some pody of herself, and please Cot, she hoped and believed, she should not tisgrace or tisparage a petter situation." When she came near the countess, she took care to press forward for a gracious look ; but this was not all, she had always envied the consequence of Mrs. Abergwilly, in having so great a house as the Hall entirely under her management ; and she now determined, upon the strength of her favour with lady Cherbury, to have something to say to it, and of course increase her consequence among her neighbours. There was nothing on earth she so much delighted in as a bustle, and the present scene was quite adapted to her taste, for all within and without the house was joyous confusion. The first specimen she gave of her intention was, in helping to distribute refreshments amongst the tenants ; she then proceeded to the dinner parlour, to give her opinion and assistance, and direction about laying out the table. Mrs. Abergwilly, like the generality of those accustomed to absolute power, could not tamely submit to any innovation on it. She curbed her resentment, however, and civilly told Mrs. Edwin she wanted no assistance : " Thank Cot," said she, " she was not come to this time of tay without being able to give proper tirections about laying out a table."

Mrs. Edwin said, " To be sure Mrs. Abergwilly might have a very pretty taste, but then another person might have as good a one."

The day was intensely hot ; she pinned back her gown, which was a rich silk, that had belonged to lady Malvina, and without farther ceremony began altering the dishes, and saying, " She knew the taste of her tear laty the countess, petter than any one else, and that she would take an early opportunity of going through the apartments, and telling Mrs. Abergwilly how to arrange the furniture."

The Welsh blood of the house-keeper could bear no more, and she began abusing Mrs. Edwin, though

in terms scarcely articulate; to which she replied with interest.

In the midst of this fracas, old Edwin entered. "For the love of Cot," he asked, "and the mercy of heaven, could they choose no other time or day than the present to begin and fight and scold, and abuse each other like a couple of Welch witches? What would the noble earl and the countess say?—Oh Lort! oh Lort! he felt himself blushing all over for the misdemeanor."

His remonstrance had an immediate effect; they were both ashamed of their conduct; their rage abated, they became friends, and Mrs. Edwin resigned the direction of the dinner table to Mrs. Abergwilly, satisfied with being allowed to preside among the tenants.

The bridal party found Howell in the dining parlour, and his company increased their pleasure. After dinner the rustics commenced their dancing in the avenue to the strains of the harp, and afforded a delightful scene of innocent gaiety to their benevolent entertainers, who smiled to see

The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
By holding out to tire each other down:
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.

After tea the party went out amongst them, and the gentlemen for a short time mingled in the dance. Long it could not detain lord Cherbury from his Amanda. Oh! with what ecstasy did he listen to the soft accents of her voice, whilst his fond heart assured him she was now his; the remembrances of his past difficulties but increased his felicity.

In the course of the week all the neighbouring families came to pay their congratulations at Tudor-Hall; invitations were given and received, and it again became the seat of pleasure and hospitality; but Amanda did not suffer the possession of happiness to obliterate one grateful remembrance from her mind; she was not one of these selfish beings, who, on being what is termed settled for life, immediately contract themselves within the

narrow sphere of their own enjoyments; still was her heart as sensible as ever to the glow of friendship and compassion; she wrote to all the friends she had ever received kindnesses from, in terms of the warmest gratitude, and her letters were accompanied by presents sufficiently valuable to prove her sincerity. She sent an invitation to Emily Rushbrook, which was immediately accepted; and now a discovery took place which infinitely surprised and pleased Amanda—namely, that Howell was the young clergyman Emily was attached to. He had gone to London on a visit to the gentleman who had patronized him; her youth, her simplicity, above all her distress, affected his heart, and in the hope of mitigating that distress (which he was shocked to see had been aggravated by the ladies she came to) he had followed her; to soothe the wretched, to relieve the distressed, was not considered more a duty than a pleasure by Howell; and the little favours he conferred upon the Rushbrooks afforded, if possible, more pleasure to him than they did to them; so sweet are the feelings of benevolence and virtue. But compassion was not long the sole motive of his interest in their affairs; the amiable manners, the gentle conversation of Emily completely subdued his unfortunate passion for Amanda, and in stealing her image from his heart, she implanted her own in its place. He described in a romantic manner the little rural cottage he invited her to share—he anticipated the happy period when it should become an asylum to her parents—when he, like a second father, should assist their children through the devious paths of life; these fond hopes and expectations vanished the moment he received Mrs. Connel's letter. He could not think of sacrificing the interest of Rushbrook to the consideration of his own happiness, and therefore generously, but with the most agonizing conflicts, resigned his Emily to a more prosperous rival; his joy at finding her disengaged, still his own unaltered Emily, can better be conceived than described. He pointed out the little sheltered cottage which again he hoped she would share, and blest with her the hand that had opened her

father's prison gates. Lord and lady Cherbury delighted to think they could contribute to the felicity of two such amiable beings; and the latter wrote to captain and Mrs. Rushbrook on the subject, who immediately replied to her letter, declaring that their fondest wish would be gratified in bestowing their daughter on Howell. They were accordingly invited to the Hall; and in the same spot where, a month before, he ratified the vows of lord Cherbury and Amanda, did Howell plight his own to Emily, who from the hand of lady Cherbury received a nuptial present sufficient to procure every enjoyment her humble and unassuming spirit aspired to. Her parents, after passing a few days in her cottage, departed, rejoicing at the happiness of their beloved child, and truly grateful to those who had contributed to it.

And now did the grateful children of Fitzalan amply reward the Edwins for their past kindnesses to their parents and themselves; an annual stipend was settled on Edwin by lord Dunreath, and the possessions of Ellen were enlarged by Amanda. Now was realized every scheme of domestic happiness she had ever formed; but even that happiness could not alleviate her feelings on Oscar's account, whose faded cheek, whose languid eye, whose total abstraction in the midst of company, evidently proved the state of his heart; and the tear of regret, which had so often fallen for her own sorrows, was now shed for his; he had written to Mrs. Marlowe a particular account of every thing which had befallen him since their separation: she answered his letter immediately, and, after congratulating him in the warmest terms on the change in his situation, informed him that Adela was then at one of Belgrave's seats in England, and that he was gone to the continent; her style was melancholy, and she concluded her letter in these words: "no longer, my dear Oscar, is my fire-side enlivened by gaiety or friendship; sad and solitary I sit within my cottage, till my heart sickens at the remembrance of past scenes, and if I wander from it, the objects without, if possible, add to the bitterness of that remembrance. The closed win-

dows, the grass-grown paths, the dejected servants of Wood-lawn, all recall to my mind those hours when it was the mansion of hospitality and pleasure. I often linger by the grave of the general, my tears fall upon it, and I think of that period when, like him, I shall drop into it; but my last hours will not close like his, no tender child will bend over my pillow to catch my last sigh, to soothe my last pang; in vain my closing eyes will look for the pious drops of nature or of friendship. Unfriended I shall die, with the sad consciousness of doing so through my own means: but I shall not be quite unmourned; you and my Adela, the sweet daughter of my care, will regret the being whose affection, whose sympathy for you both, can only be obliterated with life."

 CHAP. XI.

The modest virtues mingled in her eyes,
 Still on the ground dejected, darting all
 Their humid beams into the opening flowers;
 Or when she thought——
 Of what her faithless fortune promised once,
 They, like the dewy star
 Of evening, shone in tears.

THOMSON.

ADELA, on the death of her father, was taken by Belgrave to England, though the only pleasure he experienced in removing her was derived from the idea of wounding her feelings, by separating her from Mrs. Marlowe, whom he knew she was tenderly attached to. From his connexions in London she was compelled to mix in society; compelled, I say, for the natural gaiety of her soul was quite gone, and that solitude which permitted her to brood over the remembrance of

past days, was the only happiness she was capable of enjoying. When the terrors of Belgrave drove him from the kingdom, he had her removed to Wood-house, to which it may be remembered he had once brought Amanda, and from which the imperious woman who then ruled it was removed; but the principal domestic was equally harsh and insolent in her manner, and to her care the unfortunate Adela was consigned, with strict orders that she should not be allowed to receive any company, or correspond with any being. Accustomed from her earliest youth to the greatest tenderness, this severity plunged her in the deepest despondency, and life was a burthen she would gladly have resigned; her melancholy, or rather her patient sweetness, at last softened the flinty nature of her *gouvernante*, and she was permitted to extend her walks beyond the gardens, to which they had hitherto been confined; but she availed herself of this permission only to visit the church-yard belonging to the hamlet, whose old yew trees she had often seen waving from the windows. Beneath their solemn gloom she loved to sit, while evening closed around her; and in a spot, sequestered from every human eye, weep over the recollection of that father she had lost, that friend she was separated from.

She remained in the church-yard one night beyond her usual hour. The soft beams of the moon alone prevented her from being involved in darkness, and the plaintive breathings of a flute from the neighbouring hamlet just stole upon her ear. Lost in sadness, her head resting upon her hand, she forgot the progress of time; when suddenly she beheld a form rising from a neighbouring grave. She started up, screamed, but had no power to move; the form advanced to her; it was the figure of a venerable man, who gently exclaimed, "Be not afraid!" His voice dissipated the involuntary fears of Adela; but still she trembled so much she could not move. "I thought," cried he, gazing on her; "this place had been alone the haunt of wretchedness and me." "If sacred to sorrow," exclaimed Adela, "I well may claim the privilege of entering it." She

spoke involuntarily, and her words seemed to affect the stranger deeply. "So young," said he, "'tis melancholy indeed; but still the sorrows of youth are more bearable than those of age; because, like age, it has not out-lived the fond ties, the sweet connexions of life."—"Alas!" cried Adela, unable to repress her feelings, "I am separated from all I regarded." The stranger leaned pensively against a tree for a few minutes, and then again addressed her: "'Tis a late hour," said he: "suffer me to conduct you home, and also permit me to ask if I may see you here to-morrow night. Your youth, your manner, your dejection, all interest me deeply; the sorrows of youth are often increased by imagination. You will say nothing can exceed its pains; 'tis true, but it is a weakness to yield to them—a weakness which from a sensible mind will be eradicated the moment it hears of the real calamities of life; such a relation I can give you, if you meet me to-morrow night in this sad, this solitary spot; a spot I have visited every closing evening, without ever before meeting a being in it."

His venerable looks, his gentle, pathetic manner, affected Adela inexpressibly; she gazed on him with emotions somewhat similar to those with which she used to contemplate the mild features of her father. "I will meet you," cried she, "but my sorrows are not imaginary." She refused to let him attend her home; and in this incident there was something affecting and romantic, which soothed and engrossed the mind.

She was punctual the next evening to the appointed hour. The stranger was already in the church-yard; he seated her at the head of the grave from which she had seen him rise the preceding night, and which was only distinguished from the others by a few flowering shrubs planted around it, and began his promised narrative.—He had not proceeded far ere Adela began to tremble with emotion—as he continued it increased. At last suddenly catching his hand, with wildness, she exclaimed—"She lives, the wife so bitterly lamented still lives, a solitary mourner for your sake. Oh never! never did she injure you as you suppose. Oh dear inestimable

Mrs. Marlowe, what happiness to the child of your care, to think that through her means you will regain the being you have so tenderly regretted; regain him with a heart open to receive you." The deep convulsive sobs of her companion now pierced her ear; for many minutes he was unable to speak: at last, raising his eyes, "Oh Providence! I thank thee," he exclaimed; "again shall my arms fold to my heart its best beloved object. Oh, my Fanny, how have I injured thee! Learn from me," he continued, turning to Adela, "oh learn from me never to yield to rashness; had I allowed myself time to inquire into the particulars of my wife's conduct; had I resisted; instead of obeying the violence of passion, what years of lingering misery should I have saved us both. But tell me where I shall find my solitary mourner, as you call her." Adela gave him the desired information, and also told him her own situation. "The wife of Belgrave!" he repeated; "then I wonder not," continued he, as if involuntarily, "at your sorrows." It was indeed to Howell, the unfortunate father of Juliana, the regretted husband of Mrs. Marlowe, that Adela had been addressing herself. He checked himself, however, and told her, that the being by whose grave they sat, had been hurried, through the villany of Belgrave, to that grave. Adela told him of the prohibition against her writing; but at the same time assured him, ere the following night she would find an opportunity of writing a letter, which he should bring to Mrs. Marlowe, who, by its contents, would be prepared for his appearance, as it was to be sent in to her. But Adela was prevented from putting her intention into execution by an event as solemn as unexpected.

The ensuing morning she was disturbed from sleep by a violent noise in the house, as of people running backwards and forwards in confusion and distress. She was hurrying on her clothes to go and inquire into the cause of it, when a servant rushed into the room, and in a hasty manner told her that colonel Belgrave was dead.—Struck with horror and amazement, Adela stood petrified, gazing on her; the maid repeated her words, and

added that he had died abroad, and his remains were brought over to Wood-house for interment, attended by a French gentleman, who looked like a priest. The various emotions which assailed the heart of Adela at this moment were too much for her weak frame, and she would have fallen to the floor, but for the maid. It was some time ere she recovered her sensibility, and when she did regain it, she was still so agitated as to be unable to give those directions which the domestics, who now looked up to her in a very different light from what they had hitherto done, demanded from her. All she could desire was, that the steward should pay every respect and attention to the gentleman who had attended the remains of his master, and have every honour that was due to those remains. To suppose she regretted Belgrave would be unnatural; but she felt horror, mingled with a degree of pity, for his untimely fate, at the idea of his dying abroad, without one connexion, one friend near him.

His last moments were indeed more wretched than she could conceive. Overwhelmed with terror and grief, he had quitted England; terror at the supposition of a crime which, in reality, he had not committed, and grief for the fate of Amanda. He sought to lose his horrors in inebriety; but this, joined to the agitations of the mind, brought on a violent fever, by the time he had landed at Calais, in the paroxysm of which, had the attendants understood his language, they would have been shocked at the crimes he revealed. His senses were restored a short time before he died; but what excruciating anguish, as well as horror, did he suffer from their restoration! he knew, from his own feelings, as well as from the looks of his attendants, that his last moments were approaching, and the recollection of past actions made him shudder at these moments! Oh Howell! how were you amply avenged for all the pangs he made you suffer! Now did the pale image of your shrouded Juliana seem to stand beside his bed, reproaching his barbarity! Every treacherous action now rose to view, and, trembling, he groaned with terror at the spectres which a guilty con-

science raised around him. Death would have been a release, could he have considered it an annihilation of all existence; but that future world he had always derided, that world was opening, in all its awful horrors, to his view. Already he saw himself before its sacred Judge, surrounded by the accusing spirits of those he had injured. He desired a clergyman to be brought to him: a priest was sent for. Their faiths were different, but still, as a man of God, Belgrave applied to him for an alleviation of his tortures. The priest was superstitious, and, ere he tried to comfort, he wished to convert; but scarcely had he commenced the attempt, ere the wretched being before him clasped his hands together, in a strong convulsion, and expired. The English servant who attended Belgrave informed the people of the hotel of his rank and fortune, and the priest offered to accompany his remains to England. He was, by the direction of Adela, who had not resolution to see him, amply rewarded for his attention, and, in two days after their arrival at Woodhouse, the remains of Belgrave were consigned to their kindred earth. From a sequestered corner of the churchyard Howell witnessed his interment. When all had departed he approached the grave of his daughter—"He is gone!" he exclaimed, "my Juliana, your betrayer is gone! at the tribunal of his God he now answers for his cruelty to you! But, oh! may he find mercy from that God! may He pardon him as this solemn moment I have done!—My enmity lives not beyond the grave!"

Adela now sent for Howell, and, after their first emotions had subsided, informed him she meant immediately to return to Ireland. The expectation of her doing so had alone prevented his going before. They accordingly commenced their journey the ensuing day, and in less than a week reached the dear and destined spot, so interesting to both. They had previously settled on the manner in which the discovery should be revealed to Mrs. Marlowe, and Adela went alone into her cottage. Sad and solitary, as Mrs. Marlowe said in her letter to Oscar, did Adela find her in her parlour; but it was a

sadness which vanished the moment she beheld her. With all the tenderness of a mother she clasped Adela to her breast, and, in the sudden transports of joy and surprise, for many minutes did not notice her dress; but when she did observe it, what powerful emotions did it excite in her breast! Adela, scarcely less agitated than she was, could not, for many minutes, relate all that had happened; at last the idea of the state in which she had left Howell, made her endeavour to compose herself. Mrs. Marlowe wept while she related her sufferings; but when she mentioned Howell, surprise suspended her tears; a surprise increased when she began the story; but when she came to that part where she herself had betrayed such emotion, while listening to Howell, Mrs. Marlowe started and turned pale. "Your feelings are similar to mine," said Adela, "at this period I became agitated. Yes," she continued, "it was at this period I laid my trembling hand on his, and exclaimed, she lives!" "Merciful heaven!" cried Mrs. Marlowe, "what do you mean?" "Oh! let me now," cried Adela, clasping her arms round her, "repeat to you the same expression: he lives! that husband, so beloved and regretted, lives!" "Oh! bring him to me!" said Mrs. Marlowe, in a faint voice, "let me behold him, while I have reason myself to enjoy the blessing." Adela flew from the room; Howell was near the door. He approached—he entered the room. He tottered forward, and in one moment was at the feet, and in the arms of his wife, who, transfixed to the chair, could only open her arms to receive him. The mingled pain and pleasure of such a re-union cannot be described: both, with tears of grateful transport, blest the Power which had given such comfort to their closing days. "But my children," exclaimed Mrs. Marlowe, suddenly, "ah! when shall I behold my children! why did they not accompany you? ah! did they deem me, then, unworthy of bestowing a mother's blessing?" Howell trembled and turned pale. "I see," said Mrs. Marlowe, interpreting his emotion, "I am a wife but not a mother." Howell, recovering his fortitude, took her hand, and pressed it to his bosom;

"Yes," he replied, "you are a mother; one dear, one amiable child remains. Heaven be praised!" he paused, and a tear fell to the memory of Juliana. "But heaven," he resumed, "has taken the other to its eternal rest. Inquire not concerning her at present, I entreat; soon will I conduct you to the grave, there will I relate her fate, and together will we mourn it—then shall the tears that never yet bedewed the grave, the precious tears of a mother, embalm her sacred dust!"

Mrs. Marlowe wept, but she complied with her husband's request; she enquired in a broken voice about her son, and the knowledge of his happiness gradually cheered her mind.

Adela consented to stay that night in the cottage, but the next day she determined on going to Woodlawn; to think she should again wander through it, again linger in the walks she had trodden with those she loved, gave to her mind a melancholy pleasure. The next morning, attended by her friend, she repaired to it, and was inexpressibly affected by reviewing scenes endeared by tender remembrances of happy hours. The house, from its closed windows, appeared quite neglected and melancholy, as if pleasure had forsaken it with the poor departed general. Standard, his favourite horse, grazed in the lawn, and beside him, as if a secret sympathy endeared them to each other, stood the dog that always attended the general in his walks; it instantly recollected Adela, and running to her, licked her hand, and evinced the utmost joy. She patted him on the head, while her tears burst forth at the idea of him who had been his master. The transports of the old domestics, particularly of the grey-headed butler, at her unexpected return, increased her tears. But when she entered the parlour, in which her father usually sat, she was quite overcome, and motioning with her hand for her friends not to mind her, she retired to the garden. There was a little romantic root-house at the termination of it, where she and Oscar had passed many happy hours together; thither she repaired, and his idea, thus revived in her mind, did not lessen its dejection. While she sat within it indulging

her sorrow, her eye caught some lines inscribed on one of its windows. She hastily arose, and, examining them, instantly recollected the hand of Oscar. They were as follows:

Adieu, sweet girl, a last adieu !
 We part to meet no more ;
 Adieu to peace, to hope, to you,
 And to my native shore.

If fortune had propitious smiled,
 My love had made me blest ;
 But she, like me, is sorrow's child,
 By sadness dire opprest.

I go to India's sultry clime,
 Oh ! never to return ;
 Beneath some lone embow'ring lime
 Will be thy soldier's urn.

No kindred spirit there shall weep,
 Or pensive musing stray ;
 My image thou alone wilt keep,
 And grief's soft tribute pay.

Oscar, previous to his going to England, with the expectation of being sent to the West-Indies, had paid a secret visit to Woodlawn, to review and bid adieu to every well-known and beloved spot, and had one morning at early day inscribed those lines on a window in the root-house, prompted by a tender melancholy he could not resist.

"His love is then unfortunate," said Adela, pensively leaning her head upon her hand ; "oh, Oscar ! how sad a similitude is there between your fate and mine !" She returned to the house.—Mr. and Mrs. Howell (for so we shall in future call Mrs. Marlowe, that name being only assumed while her husband had a prospect of inheriting his uncle's fortune) had consented to stay some time with her. Oscar's lines run in her head the whole day ; and in the evening she again stole out to read them.

She had been absent some time when Mrs. Howell came out to her: Adela blushed and started at being caught at the window. "'Tis a long time, my dear Adela," said Mrs. Howell, "since we had a ramble in this delightful garden together; indulge me in taking one, and let us talk of past times." "Past times," cried Adela, with a faint smile, "are not always the pleasantest to talk about." "There are some, at least one friend," cried Mrs. Howell, "whom you have not yet inquired after." Adela's heart suddenly palpitated; she guessed who that one friend was. "Oscar Fitzalan, surely," continued Mrs. Howell, "merits an inquiry; I have good news to tell you of him, therefore, without chiding you for any seeming neglect, I will reveal it." She accordingly related his late reverse of situation.— Adela heard her with deep attention. "Since fortune, then, is propitious at last," cried she, "his love will no longer be unfortunate." "'Tis time, indeed," said Mrs. Howell, looking at her with pleasure, "that love so pure, so constant as his, should be rewarded. Oh! Adela," she continued, suddenly taking her hand, "sweet daughter of my care, how great is my happiness at this moment, to think of that about to be your portion!" "My happiness!" exclaimed Adela in a dejected voice. "Yes," replied Mrs. Howell, "in your union with a man every way worthy of possessing you; a man, who, from the first moment he beheld you, has never ceased to love—in short, with Oscar Fitzalan himself."

"Impossible!" cried Adela, trembling with emotion as she spoke: "Did not—how humiliating is the remembrance! did not Oscar Fitzalan reject me, when the too generous and romantic spirit of my beloved father offered my hand to his acceptance?"

"For once," said Mrs. Howell, "I must disturb the sacred ashes of the dead, to prevent the innocent from being unhappy. Oh! Adela, you were cruelly deceived, and the moment which gave you to Belgrave rendered Oscar the most wretched of mankind. My heart was the repository of all his griefs, and how many are the bitter tears I have shed over them. Be composed," conti-

rued she, seeing Adela's agitation, "and a few moments will explain every thing to you." She led her back to the root-house, and in the most explicit manner informed her of Belgrave's treachery. Adela burst into tears as she concluded. She wept on Mrs. Howell's bosom, and acknowledged she had removed a weight of uneasiness from her mind. "Poor Oscar!" she continued, "how much would the knowledge of his misery have aggravated mine!" "He acted nobly," said Mrs. Howell, "in concealing it, and amply will he be rewarded for such conduct." She then proceeded to inform Adela that she soon expected a visit from him. There was something in her look and manner which instantly excited the suspicion of Adela, who, blushing, starting, trembling, exclaimed—"He is already come!" Mrs. Howell smiled, and a tear fell from her upon the soft hand of Adela. "He is already come," she repeated, "and he waits, oh how impatiently! to behold his Adela."

We may believe his patience was not put to a much longer test. But, when Adela in reality beheld him, as she entered the parlour, where she had left Mr. Howell, and where he waited for the re-appearance of her friend, she sunk, beneath her emotion, upon that faithful bosom which had so long suffered the most excruciating pangs on her account, and it was many minutes ere she was sensible of the soft voice of Oscar. Oh! who shall paint his transports, after all his sufferings, to be thus rewarded! But in the midst of his happiness the idea of the poor general, who had so generously planned it, struck upon his heart with a pang of sorrow. "Oh, my Adela!" he cried, clasping her to his heart, as if doubly endeared by the remembrance, "is Oscar at last permitted to pour forth the fulness of his soul before you, to reveal its tenderness, to indulge the hope of calling you his—a hope which affords the delightful prospect of being able to contribute to your felicity? Yes, most generous of friends!" he exclaimed, raising his eyes to a picture of the general, "I will endeavour to evince my gratitude to you by my conduct to your child." Oh! how did the tear he shed

to the memory of her father interest the heart of Adela! her own fell with it, and she felt that the presence of that being to whom they were consecrated was alone wanting to complete their happiness. It was long ere she was sufficiently composed to inquire the reason of Oscar's sudden appearance, and still longer ere he could inform her. Mrs. Marlowe's melancholy letter, he at last said, had brought him over, with the hope of being able to cheer her solitude, and also, he acknowledged, his own dejection, by mutual sympathy. From her cottage he had been directed to Woodlawn, and at Woodlawn received particulars, not only of her happiness, but his own. Adela, who had never yet deviated from propriety, would not now infringe it, and resolutely determined, till the expiration of her mourning, not to bestow her hand on Oscar, but permitted him to hope, that, in the intervening space, most of his time might be devoted to her; it was necessary however to sanction that hope by having proper society. She could not flatter herself with much longer retaining Mr. and Mrs. Howell, as the latter particularly was impatient to behold her son. Oscar therefore requested and obtained permission from Adela to write, in her name, to lord and lady Cherbury, and intreat their company at Woodlawn, promising she would then accompany them to Castle Carberry, and from thence to Dunreath Abbey; a tour which, previous to Oscar's leaving Wales, had been agreed on. The invitation was accepted, and in a few days Oscar beheld the two beings most valued by him in the world, introduced to each other. Tears of rapture started to his eyes as he saw his Adela folded to the bosom of his lovely sister, who called her the sweet restorer of her brother's happiness! Lord Cherbury was already acquainted with her, and, next to his Amanda, considered her the loveliest of human beings; and lady Martha, and lady Araminta, who were also invited to Woodlawn, regarded her in the same light. A few days after their arrival, Mrs. Howell prepared for her departure. Adela, who considered her as a second mother, could not behold these preparations without tears of real regret. "Oh,

my Adela!" she exclaimed, "these tears flatter, yet distress me; I am pleased to think the child of my care regards me with such affection, but I am hurt to think she should consider my loss such an affliction. Oh, my child! may the endearments of the friends who surround you steal from you all painful remembrances! Nature calls me from you; I sigh to behold my child; I sigh," she continued, with eyes suffused in tears, "to behold the precious earth which holds another."

About three weeks after her departure, the whole party proceeded to Castle Carberry. Amanda could not re-enter it without emotions of the most painful nature; she recollected the moment in which she had quitted it, oppressed with sorrow and sickness, to attend the closing period of a father's life. She wept, and sighed to think that the happiness he had prayed for he could not behold. Lord Cherbury saw her emotions, and soothed them with the softest tenderness; it was due to that tenderness to conquer her dejection, and in future the remembrance of her father was only attended with a pleasing melancholy. She did not delay visiting the convent; the good-natured nuns crowded around her, and cried, laughed, and wished her joy almost in the same moment, particularly sister Mary; the prioress's pleasure was of a less violent, but more affecting nature. An almost constant scene of gaiety was kept up at the Castle; a gaiety, however, which did not prevent Lord and Lady Cherbury from inspecting into the situation of their poor tenants, whose wants they relieved, whose grievances they redressed, and whose hearts they cheered by a promise of spending some months in every year at the castle. After continuing at it six weeks, they crossed over to Port-Patrick, and from thence proceeded to Dunreath Abbey, which had been completely repaired, and furnished in a style equally modern and elegant; and here it was determined they should remain till the solemnization of Lord Dunreath's nuptials. The time which intervened till the period appointed for them was agreeably diversified by parties among the neighbouring families, and excursions about the country; but no hours were happier than

those which the inhabitants of the Abbey passed when free from company, so truly were they united to each other by affection. Lord Dunreath, soon after his return, waited upon the Marquis of Rosline, and by his sister's desire signified to him, that if a visit from her would be agreeable to the Marquis, she would pay it; this, however was declined, and about the same period Lady Dunreath died. Mrs. Bruce, to whom from long habit she was attached, then retired to another part of Scotland, ashamed to remain where her conduct was known: a conduct which deeply affected her niece, whom Amanda visited immediately after her arrival, and found settled in a neat house near the town she had lodged in. She received Lady Cherbury with every demonstration of real pleasure, and both she and her little girls spent some time with her at the Abbey.

The happy period for completing the felicity of Oscar at last arrived. In the chapel where his parents were united he received from the hand of Lord Cherbury the lovely object of his long-trying affections. The ceremony was only witnessed by his own particular friends; but at dinner all the neighbouring families were assembled, and the tenants were entertained in the great hall, where dancing commenced at an early, and was continued to a late hour. Now having (to use the words of Adam) brought our story to the sum of earthly bliss, we shall conclude, first giving a brief account of the characters connected with it.

Lady Greystock, who was one of the most distinguished, we shall first mention. After the death of Lady Euphrasia, she found her company no longer desired at the Marquis's, and accordingly repaired to Bath: here she had not been long ere she became acquainted with a set of female puritans, who soon wrought a total change (I will not say a reformation) in her ladyship's sentiments; and, to give a convincing proof of this change, she was prevailed on to give her hand to one of their spruce young preachers, who shortly taught her, what indeed she had long wanted to learn, the doctrine of repentance, for most sincerely did she repent putting herself

into his power. Vexation, disappointment, and grief brought on a lingering illness, from which she never recovered: when convinced she was dying, she sent for Rushbrook, and made a full confession of her treachery and injustice to him, in consequence of which he took immediate possession of his uncle's fortune; and thus in the evening of his life enjoyed a full recompence for the trials of its early period. Lady Greystock died with some degree of satisfaction at the idea of disappointing her husband of the fortune she was convinced he had married her for

Mrs. Howell, after visiting her son, retired to her husband's cottage, where their days glide on in a kind of pleasing melancholy; the happiness of that son and his Emily is as perfect as happiness can be in this sublunary state.

Sir Charles Bingley, after studiously avoiding Lord and Lady Cherbury for above two years, at last by chance was thrown in their way, and then had the pleasure of finding he was not as agitated at the sight of Amanda as he had dreaded. He did not refuse the invitation of Lord Cherbury: the domestic happiness he saw him enjoying, rendered his own unconnected and wandering life more unpleasant than ever to him. Lady Araminta Dormer was almost constantly in his company; no longer fascinated by Amanda, he could now see and admire her perfections: he soon made known his admiration; the declaration was not ungraciously received, and he offered his hand and was accepted; an acceptance which put him in possession of happiness equal to Lord Cherbury's.

The Marquis and Marchioness of Rosline pass their days in gloomy retirement, regretful of the past, and hopeless of the future. Freeloze flutters about every public place, boasts of having carried off a Scotch heiress; and thinks from that circumstance he may now lay siege to any female heart with a certainty of being successful.

To return once more to the sweet descendants of the Dunreath family: the goodness of heart, the simplicity

of manners which ever distinguished them they still retain; from having been children of sorrow themselves they feel for all who come under that denomination, and their charity is at once bestowed as a tribute from gratitude to Heaven, and from humanity to woe, from gratitude to that Being who watched their unsheltered youth, who regarded them through innumerable perils, who placed them on the summit of prosperity, from whence, by dispensing his gifts around, they trust to be translated to a still greater height of happiness. Lady Dunreath's wish is fulfilled: to use her own words, their past sorrows are only remembered to teach them pity for the woes of others; their virtues have added to the renown of their ancestors, and entailed peace upon their own souls; their children, by all connected with them, are considered as blessings; gratitude has already consecrated their names, and their example has inspired others with emulation to pursue their courses.

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